THE PATAGONIAN AND PAMPEAN HUNTERS

By John M. Cooper

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Pa T 131 The section of the Pampa which here interests us (map 1, *Nos. 1D, 1E, 1F;* map 2) extends about 600 miles (960 km.) north to south from about a line between Córdoba and the mouth of the La Plata to a line between the Río Colorado and the Río Negro (pl. 3, *bottom, right;* pl. 4, *top, left*), where Patagonia begins, and thence stretches about 1,000 miles (1,600 km.) from north to south to the Strait of Magellan and the isthmus connecting Brunswick Peninsula with the mainland. Pa T 133 The Pampa is a low-lying plain, nowhere over 1,000 feet (305 m.) above sea level, except for the Sierra del Tandil and Sierra de la Ventana in southern Buenos Aires Province. Apart from the low coastal belt, Patagonia is mostly a broken tableland, one to five thousand feet above sea level (pls. 1 and 2).

Pa T 132 Average temperatures at Buenos Aires, near the northeastern limit of the Pampa, are 48.9° F. in July, the coldest month, and 73.6° in January, the warmest month; at Choele-Choel, near the border line between the Pampa and Patagonia, 45.1° and 75.4°; at Santa Cruz, in far southern Patagonia, 35.2° and 58.6° (cf. New York City, 30.6° in January and 73.5° in July). The Pampa is marked by frequent steady-blowing high winds; Patagonia, by still more frequent blustery violent winds from the west and southwest.

Pa T 137 The eastern, or Humid Pampa, is, or was, treeless grassland (pl. 3, *top, right,* and *bottom, left;* pl. 4, *top, right*); the western or Dry Pampa (pl. 3, *top, left*), xerophytic scrub-tree and bush land; most of Patagonia has cover largely like that of the Dry Pampa, but considerable grassland especially in the western part. Along the piedmont and eastern slopes of the Andean Cordillera flanking the Pampa and Patagonia to the west, is a broken forest belt (pl. 4, *bottom, left* and *right*), constituting an extension of the Antarctic flora with its beeches and other characteristic trees and shrubs. (For fuller details on environment, cf.: Jones, 1930; James, 1942.)

Pa T 136 Of the land fauna, the most important from the native standpoint were the guanaco (*Lama glama guanicoe:* Cabrera and Yepes, 1940, at length, a favourable opportunity seemed to have arrived for carrying out the cherished scheme of traversing the country from Punta Arena to the Rio Negro, Valdivia, or even to Buenos Ayres. The accounts given me of the Tehuelche character and of the glorious excitement of the chase after the guanaco, graphically described by a seaman, Sam Bonner, who had been much on the coast and had resided at the Santa Cruz station, made me more than ever anxious to prosecute this plan; and, having a tolerable acquaintance with Spanish, which language many of the Indians know well, it seemed to me possible to safely traverse the country in company with some one or other of their wandering parties. Accordingly I bestirred myself to obtain information as to the best way of getting such an introduction to the Indians as would probably secure their consent; to which end most material assistance was afforded by Mr. Dean, of Stanley, who kindly provided me with letters of introduction to Captain Luiz Piedra Buena, an intelligent Argentine well known in Stanley, the owner of a schooner, in which he worked the seal fisheries on the coast, and also of a trading station at the Middle Island, on the Santa Cruz river. Mr. Dean was of opinion that I should be almost certain to meet with Don Luiz in the Straits of Magellan, and that he would willingly exert his influence with the Indians to enable me to carry out my plan of travel. I was furthermore provided with letters of credit to the firm of Messrs. Aguirre and Murga, at Patagones, or, as it is most commonly called at Stanley, the Rio Negro.

Thus armed with credentials, and equipped with a guanaco skin mantle, laso and bolas, I availed myself of the offer of a passage to the Straits made by an old friend who was bound to the westward coast.

●133 In the first week of April we sailed from Stanley, and, after a boisterous passage of eleven days, anchored in Possession Bay, just within the entrance of the Straits, to wait for the turn of the tide, as the extreme velocity with which the

133 tides ebb and flow through these channels renders it impossible for any vessel not possessed of great steam-power to proceed except the tide is favourable. Our first view of the Straits did not impress me favourably. On either hand the shores looked bleak and barren, though far away to the south and west the mountains of Tierra del Fuego could be distinctly seen. As we anchored early in the afternoon, a descent on the coast of Patagonia was proposed, and a party speedily volunteered—well provided with guns and other arms, for the purposes of sport and self-defence in case of necessity—and were soon in the boat. As the tide was out, the shoal water did not permit us to reach the shore, so we had to wade some two or three hundred yards over beds of sharp-edged mussels, and, after a climb up the steep cliff, found ourselves on the verge of a barren plain which seemed perfectly destitute of life.

136 After a tramp of some distance we came to the edge of a gully running down to the coast, where finding the torn carcase of a guanaco, we stopped to examine what was to most of us an unknown animal; and our speculations as to the curious hybrid form of the odd-looking 'camel-sheep' were put an end to by the discovery close by of the fresh footprints of a puma. These were eagerly tracked, in the hopes of a little entertainment; but after some tedious searching we abandoned the pursuit, and again resuming our excursion, tramped along through high, coarse grass, and sparsely scattered thorny bushes; some of the sportsmen varying the monotony by an occasional shot at a snipe. The day was very genial, the warmth of the bright sunshine was tempered by a wind just cool enough to make a walk pleasant, and the Patagonian climate was pronounced by all hands to be agreeable. Whilst we were beating a rough bit of ground, to our utter amazement and delight our friend the puma jumped out of a bush; but the first surprise was so great, that the opportunity of giving him a long shot was lost. Away we all started in chase, hoping to be able

136 to keep him in sight from a small adjacent eminence; and after a good breather two of the party succeeded in viewing him to somewhere near the edge of the cliffs, mainly guided by a retriever dog, which seemed as anxious as anybody to see what the catamount hide was made of. On arriving at the cliff, a seaman observed his tracks on the soft clay of the shelving brow, and soon proclaimed his discovery of the puma in a hole or small cave just below, by the exclamation of 'There he is!' at the same time thrusting the stick he had been beating with nearly into the mouth of the 'lion,' which had set our dog, and appeared about to spring on him. Two shots were fired in quick succession, but apparently without effect, as he made good his retreat, affording us a fine view as he went off, springing in great bounds, along the beach. Pursuit was of course organised, but night being near failed to afford us an opportunity of a closer study of this specimen of the feline race; and we accordingly started again for the ship, after firing a shot or two into the numerous flocks of oyster-catchers and shags which were domiciled on the rocks and about the cliffs. The number of these and other sea-birds was incalculable; the numerous beds of mussels furnishing them with constant food.

133 Next morning we were under weigh with the flood-tide, and rapidly ran through the narrows at a speed of eighteen miles an hour. The scenery on the northern side of the Straits offered little variety until we sighted the Barrancas of San Gregorio, a range of somewhat picturesque hills, rising near the north shore of the bay of the same name, and running along for some miles in an easterly direction. On the southern or Fuegian side of the Straits the land was low for some distance from the coast, and resembled the northern shore, but high mountains were visible in the background. After passing the second narrows, an hour or two's run with the flood-tide and a good head of steam brought us opposite to the 'Island of San Isabel,' or Elizabeth Island; after passing which, the snow clad peaks of Mount Sarmiento, in

the southern part of Tierra del Fuego, came into sight, 133 appearing to rise out of the water, ninety miles distant, if not more. Steaming along the coast through numerous beds [137] of the characteristic kelp seaweed, which in the most forcible way attracted our attention, by fouling the screw, and holding the ship as if anchored for about an hour, we passed Cape Negro, and opened completely different scenery. Instead of undulating plains, hills thickly wooded were seen; at the foot of one of which, on a low piece of flat ground, numerous horsemen, dressed in gay-coloured ponchos, were visible, careering about.

It was the afternoon of Sunday, which in all Spanish 070 South American countries is a gala day, more or less appropriated to horse-racing. However, the sight of a steamer appeared to cause a diversion, and, in fact, a general race to the settlement ensued, all being apparently anxious for anything new or strange. The anchor was soon dropped, near an American schooner lying off the Sandy Point, from which the Chilian settlement of Punta Arenas derives its name.

There was no sign of the Nassau, then engaged in the survey of the Straits, which we had hoped to find in this anchorage; but from the Chilian officer, who speedily boarded us, we learned that she had sailed to the westward a day or two before our arrival, and was expected to return immediately. The results of the careful observations made by Mr. Cunningham, of the scenery and natural history of the Straits, have appeared while these pages were in preparation for the press; and it affords me pleasure to refer such as desire more scientific accounts of the botany and zoology, at least of Southern Patagonia, than it was in my power to obtain, to his work.

My own object in visiting Punta Arenas was to proceed 122 thence to Santa Cruz with the Indians, or in whatever way might prove feasible; but, in truth, it was by no means clear to my mind how it was to be accomplished; it was, therefore,

doubt provident and thoughtful 'she' had stored them. 122
Gallegos sat in his saddle and laughed at the scene; but as the others could not catch the horse, he gave us a proof of his dexterity with the lazo. After this little diversion we pursued our course along the beach as far as Cape Negro, where the forests terminated, and our accompanying friends bade us adieu after taking a parting glass all round; J'aria and the other absentee overtaking us in time for this part of the performance.

Our horses' heads were then turned from the coast in a 133
north-north-west direction, and after half an hour's ride a halt was called for breakfast under the lee of a sheltering hill. To the southward we viewed the counter slope of the wooded hills, below which on the other side lay Punta Arenas. A thick growth of shrubs covered the ground, but beautiful glades of luxuriant pasture were visible; one of which opened just to the south of our camping-place, and others appeared east and west like oases of green. Their appearance caused me to remark that as a settler I should choose this location for my hut. Gallegos, however, replied that the pastures could not be used for the cattle of the settlement during the summer, as neither the Indians nor their own men could be trusted; the latter would desert, and the former would steal the beasts. After a pipe we remounted, and having crossed the hill we descended to the valley of a small but deep stream, called the Rio Chaunco, having forded which we ascended the opposite border slope, and entered on the Pampa, which name is universally used in Patagonia to designate the high undulating plains or plateaux, frequently intersected by valleys and ravines, or rising into successive or isolated hills, which generally occupy the crest of the country. The Indians, indeed, who know a little Castilian, apply the word Pampa indiscriminately to any tract of country hunted over by them. After a successful day's sport, and the contentment consequent on a hearty meal, they will ask with great satisfaction, 'Muy buena Pampa? No?' really meaning

133 'Is not the wild life the best?' But English readers, who have derived their ideas of a Pampa from Head's delightful work, or from other experiences of the unlimited grassy or thistle-covered plains which roll away for miles in the Argentine States, and offer no obstruction to the stretching gallop of the untiring gaucho, must not transfer that pleasing picture to Patagonia. The Pampas, properly so called, of Patagonia, occasionally indeed present a tolerably even and uniform succession of rolling plains covered with coarse grass, but more frequently the surface, even when unbroken by hills and suddenly yawning ravines, is sterile, with a sparse vegetation, consisting of stunted bushes and round thistle clumps; and even these are often wanting, and nothing clothes the bare patches of clay or gravel; elsewhere it is strewn with huge round boulders, and again rugged with confused heaps or ridges of bare sharp-edged rocks, many of them of volcanic origin: this more particularly applying to the northern part of the country. The only uniformity 132 of appearance is afforded in the winter, when the white sheet of snow covers rocks, grass, and shingle; but one accompaniment is the same, whatever be the nature of the soil or surface; and the word Pampa invariably recalls to one's shuddering memory the cutting blasts which sweep almost without intermission from various points, but chiefly from the west, over the high country, till, reaching the heated atmosphere of Buenos Ayres, the cold Patagonian wind becomes the Pampero, the sudden and terrific blasts of which cause so many disasters among the shipping. The 133 descent from these Pampas to the valleys, or more sheltered and fertile level ground bordering the banks of the streams and rivers, is commonly termed 'Barranca,' or bank, from the scarped slopes, varying in depth from fifty to two or three feet, and in angle from an easy to an almost perpendicular descent, but often fissured by ravines or gullies, affording roads, down all of which, however, the native riders gallop with equal recklessness.

The Pampa we were now traversing presented an expanse /33 of undulating or rolling plains covered with a uniform growth of coarse grass interspersed with barberry bushes, and occasional lagoons in the hollows. No living creatures except ourselves appeared on the waste. To the westward the snow-clad peaks of the mountains bordering the Sarmiento Straits greeted us with an icy blast which made my thoughts longingly revert to the cozy cabin and my late shipmates, who were, no doubt, threading the intricacies of its channels. But the good guanaco mantle kept out the wind, and our motley party pushed briskly on in good order. Lieutenant Gallegos has been already introduced; as to the /22 others, J'aria was a small man, of rough exterior, of doubtful extraction, and more than doubtful antecedents, who looked fit for any business except good; but he served me most assiduously and with unlooked-for care. The soldier was a fine-looking fellow, new to the Pampas, whose carbine, which he duly carried, proved a source of great embarrassment to him; and his horse being by no means too manageable, he was considerably bothered, much to the delight of the rest. Two others were hybrids, between gauchos and sailors, having, like our marines, been equally accustomed to service *per mare, per terram;* but, like the jollies, they were unmistakably useful and good men. The las of the party was of the J'aria type. All were well mounted, and provided with a spare horse. We carried for provisions biscuit, charqui or dried meat, roasted wheat meal, and coffee and sugar, and were furnished with an unusual but welcome luxury, a small tent, underneath which we cared little for the bitter frost outside.

After riding over the Pampas for three or four hours, we encamped for the night in a hollow by the side of a lagoon, having selected a suitable spot for pitching the tent on the sheltered slope, well out of the sweep of the wind. The lagoon was covered with black-necked swans and other wild [34] fowl; so, as soon as the horses had been unloaded and looked

070 after, a fire lit, and all arrangements made for camping, two or three of us went out to try and shoot some wild fowl; but our sporting endeavours were not crowned with much success, and a little before dark we returned to a supper of charqui, and after a talk over the fire, turned in, and slept sound and warm, though outside the frost was severe. My mind was much disquieted, first by the discovery that the box of rifle ammunition which J'aria carried had been dropped by that worthy at the scene of the baggage horse escapade, and secondly, by the mysterious absence from my shot-belt of all my coin, consisting of an onza and a few sovereigns. I said nothing, however, until next morning, when I proceeded quietly to search, remembering that I had taken off my accoutrements before the tent was pitched, and dropped in the grass I found the missing coins. The story afforded J'aria a great theme for jokes, and he often adverted to the chance of inheriting my onnce, in a way that might have made a timid traveller expect foul play, though nothing was farther from my guide's thoughts. At seven o'clock, after coffee and a biscuit, we were again en route, and about ten arrived close to the head of Peckett's Harbour. Here one of the party discovered a horse, which was chased into our troop, but as it appeared lame, was not pressed into our service; it had probably belonged to the Indians. As in a long voyage, so in a journey of this description, the slightest novelty serves to relieve what it is needless to say becomes the slightly monotonous task of trotting along behind the troop of horses over barren wastes, so we were always on the qui vive for something to chase. One of the men had a dog with him, and shortly after the excitement about the horse we started some ostriches, which, however, proved too swift for the cur, and escaped over some muddy plots close to the
133 'Cabeceira del Mar.' This is a large inlet or arm of the sea, running up some miles from Peckett's Harbour, with which it communicates by a very narrow channel, which can only be crossed at low water; it was our good fortune to arrive at

this period, thus escaping a long *détour* round the inlet. 133
But our crossing was not effected without trouble; the flood-tide rushing up like a mill-race, and proving almost too much for the steadiness of one of the baggage-horses. After clearing the channel, in our farther progress we passed several small streams with swampy ground, all of which probably discharge themselves into Oazy Harbour, and arrived towards evening at an old Indian encampment situated under a range of hills, running more or less north and south, forming one barrier of a broad and well-watered valley, bounded on the eastern side by the well-known 'Barrancas' of San Gregorio.

Our station was just within the opening of the valley, [361]
which, being sheltered from the wind, is the favourite winter quarters of the Southern Tehuelches, whose encampment is usually pitched near Oazy Harbour, called by them 'Oazy Saba.'

Westward the low flats which bordered the shores of the Cabecera del Mar terminated in irregular hills, beyond which higher peaks rose, and they in their turn were overlooked by distant snow-clad summits on the horizon. Among the blue hills of the middle distance floated wreaths of light haze so much resembling smoke that Gallegos, ever on the alert for signs of the deserters, proposed to deviate from our route to investigate, and only my strongly pronounced opinion in favour of haze versus smoke induced him to give up the idea. The Argentine Government formerly planned a settlement in this valley, which was not carried out, and the missionaries also proposed to fix a station hereabouts, with Oazy Harbour as a depôt, but the Chilenos of Punta Arena set up their claims and compelled the missionaries to desist.

After camp was arranged, the weather, which since our start had been bright with cold winds and moderate frosts at night, changed to rain, and Gallegos proposed to me that, in the event of its continuing bad, we should remain under the shelter of the tent. However, though the night was

Quillota (parched corn meal and water), we resumed our OCC
route north. After leaving the lagoon, a scarcely perceptible 133
slope ascended from the valley, and a more undulating course was traversed until we reached a small cañon, which after a gradual descent dipped down between walls a hundred feet high, sloping up at either hand, and finishing in a rounded summit leading to the high plain. 'Here,' said J'aria, 'there is no firing, and those *stupid* Indian women actually carry loads of it from the next stage.' But the event proved that the Indians were wiser than ourselves. Following this, we arrived at another cañon running at right angles, east and west, on one of the grass-covered sides of which we observed a couple of horses feeding in a hollow which looked more verdant than the rest of the ground, but the animals being caught and examined proved unsound and useless. In the bottom of the cañon there flowed a small but deep stream spreading into lagoons in places. We crossed this and encamped on the northern side, and found J'aria's words, as to no fuel to be found about this valley, verified, much to our discomfort. Towards evening we went out and shot some ducks, but having no fire to cook with, were content to turn in on meal and water. During the night the tent pole, having been first soaked with rain and then frozen, snapped in two, and down came the spread of wet canvas; and altogether we did not spend a very pleasant time.

Misfortunes never come single; at daylight no horses were to be seen, and we had to wait until near ten o'clock before they turned up. During this interval we burnt the tent pegs and some chips from the tent pole, and raised sufficient fire to make coffee. J'aria informed me that this cañon extends from the Cordillera to the sea, but runs in a tortuous manner, and we afterwards again struck either the main line or some
cañon leading from it. Having scaled the precipitous 133
banks, we headed towards a range of peaked hills, curiously 137
resembling one another, and after passing down one or two more cañons, where we refreshed ourselves with the berries

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

133 of a barberry (Berberis axifolia), called by the Chilians califate, and also saw plenty of the red and white tea-berries, so common in the Falklands, we entered a wide plain or valley, at the farther end of which rose a peculiar pointed hill, one of a range that stretched away east and west, pierced by a pass. In the midst of it a huge square flat rock shone white in the sunlight, forming a striking object: it looked like a megalith, deposited by giants to cover the grave of some deceased hero. Others of less dimensions lay strewn here and there, giving somewhat of a graveyard aspect to the scene. As we advanced the ground was encumbered with rocks and scoriæ, lying in heaps in all directions, making it very difficult travelling for the horses, and on arriving at the hills themselves their appearance was decidedly volcanic. The whole immediate vicinity of this range of hills presented a peculiarly wild, blasted, and weird appearance; nevertheless ostriches and guanaco were observable in great quantities. My first thought on passing one hill, where, among the other fantastic forms into which the rocks had been tossed, was a natural corral, or circle of huge fragments, built with apparent regularity, but of superhuman dimensions, was, 'What a hell this must have been when the volcanoes were in an active state, belching out the streams of lava and showers of rock, and that perhaps at no distant period!' While at Santa Cruz, Casimiro told me of an active volcano situated at a distance and in a direction which would fix it as belonging to this range. Formerly its neighbourhood had been frequented by the Indians, as the guanaco resorted thither in great numbers during the winter; but the Indians' horses most of them had been poisoned by
133 drinking the water of a stream close to the range, and soon
731 after all the toldos were shaken down by an earthquake or the vibration of an explosion, and since then they had not ventured to go near the place. Casimiro and Gonzales had, however, subsequently ascended the volcano, and had killed numbers of guanaco in the neighbourhood. It was also

mentioned that when they were encamped on the Cuheyli, or 133
Coy Inlet River, tremendous volumes of thick black smoke, 731
rolling from the west, enveloped the Indians and terrified
them exceedingly. No signs were afterwards found of burned
pasture, and it was conjectured that the Canoe Indians of
the Chonos Archipelago had fired the western forests, but it
was much more likely to have been due to volcanic eruption.
While trotting along the defile through these hills formed 133
by a chasm, with perpendicular walls of rock rising on each
hand, as evenly scraped as the sides of a railway cutting,
I observed several caves, which J'aria had a tradition the
Indians formerly used as dwelling-places. This pass led into
another valley still more rugged, and strewn with sharp
angular fragments of rock, amongst which stunted shrubs
began to appear; and lagoons, some of which were encrusted
round the edges with saltpetre, and contained brackish water,
might be seen at intervals. Towards evening we encamped
by the side of a small lagoon of circular form with wall-like
cliffs rising some 200 feet from its banks, and nearly surrounding
it. I took a stroll, rifle in hand, whilst the mozos
were getting firewood; and plenty guanaco were visible,
but I only succeeded in wounding one, which escaped on
three legs. Traces of puma, in the shape of carrion, were
also there, but Leon himself was hidden. So I returned
empty-handed to the fire, where I found a cheerful supper
of wild duck and guanaco meat just ready. The moon
was beautiful, and the air just frosty enough to be bracing
and exhilarating, so some of us staid smoking and spinning
yarns until the small hours. The stories were chiefly
of adventures on the Pampas. José narrated how, when
in pursuit of a party of runaways in the depth of winter,
when the snow lay thick on the ground, he and his comrade
rode into a valley where countless guanaco had taken
refuge from the storm in the upper heights, and stood
huddled together, too benumbed by the cold to attempt to
escape, and were slaughtered like oxen in the shambles. In

ON another hunt the party overtook the deserters, housed in the toldo of an Indian, and a fight ensued, ending in the death of one of the pursuers; the deserter who shot him was pistolled, and J'aria and José carried the dead body of their comrade on horseback to the settlement, sixty miles distant, proceeding without a halt all through the night, and accomplishing their ghastly journey by the next morning. J'aria related how he had been drifted in a launch among the ice in the Straits, and carried over to Tierra del Fuego, where they found rocks so magnetic that iron nails adhered to them. He further amused us by a short dissertation on his domestic arrangements; how, when his last wife died, he married a Chilote to be mother for his children and wife for him, and he always called her in conversation the 'Madre Muger'—wife mother.

● 133 [134] Next morning we started early, and varying our march with one or two races after foxes, which generally met their death in a very short time, and an engagement with a female puma, which one of the men despatched by a splendid revolver shot through the head, traversed some uneven Pampas, with occasional hills, and arrived at the descent of the valley of the Rio Gallegos, where the very remarkable bench formation, afterwards observed on a smaller or larger scale in other Patagonian rivers, first arrested my attention. To the west, some miles away, a high hill, apparently of basalt, the square summit of which, with seemingly regular walls and towers, mimicked the distant view of an extensive fortress, served as a landmark for the break in the barranca, which formed a natural road, by which we reached the first or upper bench, a mile and a half in width; from this a deep or scarped slope of fifty feet and upwards descended to another terrace or plain of equal extent, and terminating in another fall, at the bottom of which lay the bed of the river; it is fordable in the summer months, I believe, in many places, but when we crossed the water about reached where one's saddle flaps would be if riding on

an English saddle. After crossing the ford, a halt took place 133
to smoke a pipe, whilst doing which we watched the gyrations
of a huge vulture of the condor species; he hovered [136]
for some time, and at length boldly settled on a point of
rock about a hundred yards distant; so the soldier, whose
carbine was always ready, took a shot, but missed, much to
the grief of Gallegos, who asserts that the heart of the
vulture is a good remedy for certain diseases. We then 080
mounted, and riding about a mile halted for the night by a
spring, gushing out of a ravine in the slope between the upper
and lower benches, where the pasture was good, as *J'aria*
declared that water was scarce for some leagues farther on.
The bivouac arranged, *José* and myself proceeded to try and
shoot a guanaco, but the plain was too open, so, after lighting
up a bit of dry grass to attract any neighbouring
Indians, we very foolishly indulged in a bathe in the river.
The water was intensely cold, and the ill effects of this ill-timed
indulgence were felt for a long time after. The soldier
meanwhile was away on horseback, chasing a large herd, but
he returned about dusk empty-handed. Next morning we
started about nine o'clock, having been, as usual, delayed by the
horses having strayed some distance. Ascending the slope,
we crossed the higher bench, a barren, dreary waste, for
about a league, until we came to a lagoon covered with
upland geese, and lying just below what may be termed the
barranca of the Upper Pampa. Halting here for a smoke
and warm to dispel the effects of the intensely cold wind, we
were about resuming our route to ascend the steep slope of
the upper plains, when large columns of smoke, in answer to [202]
the signal fire we had left behind us, rose up to the sky in a
N.E. direction. We moved on, and arriving at the summit
of the ascent, looked eagerly round for signs of the fire, but
nothing was visible. The plains lay before us apparently
destitute of life, excepting a stray guanaco here and there.
J'aria then set light to a neighbouring bush, which gave out
dense clouds of black smoke, and in a few minutes this was

of women and laden horses; and this, combined with the want of landmarks on the Pampas and the confusing succession of hills closely resembling each other, renders it only too easy to lose the right direction. As examples of this, out of ten deserters of whom the party were in search, six were never more heard of. Our guide J'aria himself, when travelling from Santa Cruz to the colony, lost his way, and would inevitably have starved had he not fortunately been fallen in with by a party of Indians. Sam having agreed to come with our party, we bid adieu to the Indians, who, in return for their presents of meat, were gratified with a little tobacco, and rode off. Suddenly a fox started up from a neighbouring bush. The soldier gave chase, Sam shouted, 'Stop, I'll show you:' at the same time putting spurs to his horse, and cutting Reynard off, he put his hand to his waist-belt, drew out his bolas, gave them two turns round his head, and in another minute the fox was lying dead, with his ribs crushed completely in where the metal ball had struck him. Under the directions of our new guide, who 133
rode ahead with me, we traversed a succession of high barren plains, sinking into frequent irregular hollows, without streams, but usually containing lagoons of salt or brackish water, until, about 4 P.M., we descended into the valley of Rio Cuheyli, or the river, which debouches at Coy Inlet. The beach formation, though noticeable, is not here so decidedly marked. For some time we pursued the trail in an orderly march; but an ostrich springing nearly under our horses' feet, and escaping over some marshy swamp, where horses could not follow, roused Sam's hunting propensities, and he proposed to myself, the soldier, and José to leave the path—which he said, with emphatic disdain, was good for women, not for men—and ride up the barranca to see him ball an ostrich; so having regained the Pampa, we formed into line, about two hundred yards apart, to drive a certain area of ground down to a point where there was a gentle slope to the valley, so as to meet the advancing cavalcade of

over the rest of our party. We saw nothing except one ostrich vanishing at great speed towards the valley at another point, and a pair of doves, which I remarked with interest; so we returned to the track, and as night was closing in, pushed on, wishing to cross the ford of the river and encamp on the other side. At seven o'clock, having reached a nice spring flowing from the barrancas, where there was firewood in profusion, Gallegos ordered a halt, although Sam wished to proceed, observing that the moon was so bright it was 'all the same as day.' We accordingly encamped for the night, after making a good supper off guanaco meat, which was a pleasant change after our previous charqui. The valley of
133 the Oaheyli slightly indicates the bench formation, though it does not present so distinctly marked terraces as those which border the Gallegos River; but the lowest or river plain, which is nearly two leagues wide in the neighbourhood of the ford, is of a more fertile character, the pasture being luxuriant and good. One or two of the springs—notably the one the water of which, contrary to our guide's advice and example, we drunk—had a strong taste of iron, which caused all the party to suffer from internal derange-
386 ment; and Sam stated that near our encampment there was a deposit of the black earth with which the Indians paint
over their bodies. Starting early, after a night of severe frost, we soon struck the ford. Our guide had vanished; but while rearranging the packs, we saw a volume of black smoke rising to the east, caused by Sam, who, having thus signalled his countrymen, rejoined us on the march across the slightly ascending plain. We then observed numerous
462 Indians galloping in our direction, and crossing the stream at various parts, as J'aria remarked, quite regardless of fords. We halted, and were soon surrounded by about forty or more, most of them riding useful-looking horses barebacked.
609 As they appeared very friendly, Gallegos gave them some biscuit and charqui; their chiefs—the head cacique being a nephew of Casimiro—forming them into a semicircle, in tolerably good order, to receive the present.

tolerably good order, to receive the present. There were cgr
undoubtedly some very tall men amongst them, but what 192
struck me particularly was their splendid development of chest and arms. Although the wind was very sharp, many of them had their mantles thrown back in a careless way, leaving their naked chests exposed in the air, and appeared not the least incommoded. They readily recognised me for an Englishman, coming and examining me closely, and asking for tobacco with a broad grin on their faces, exposing a wonderfully clean and regular set of teeth. My gratifying cgr
their importunate requests for tobacco made Sam very jealous, and for some time he bothered me with remarks such as 'Me very cold, no got poncho,' 'Me no got knife, me no got "pilion"' (saddle-cloth), until, finding it useless to beg, he relapsed into sullen silence. A smoke of the pipe, however, brought him back to his usual cheerful temper, and as we galloped along he chanted an Indian song, which con- [132]
sisted of the words 'Ah go lay loo, Ah go lay loo,' expressed in various keys.

After a ride of some leagues in a rather more open but still 133
undulating country, a break in the Pampas was reached. Hills of irregular and picturesque outlines, with labyrinthine valleys or ravines, not running in parallel order, but communicating with each other, occupied an extensive district, and though travelling was considerably more difficult, yet the change in the aspect of nature was grateful after the barren monotony of the plains.

We halted in an Indian encampment, situated in a valley 361
underneath a peaked hill called 'Otiti,' where there were pools of fresh and salt water in close proximity. Amongst the incense and thorn bushes, which grow at intervals in 137
these regions, we passed to-day another description of shrub with a thick rough bark, which is readily detached, and leaves a long rattail-like sort of twig. From the Rio Gallegos the soil had become generally of a yellower colour than on the 174
south side of that river, although in the valleys and hollows

134 dark peaty earth was generally to be found, and the surface of the Pampas had assumed a more desolate appearance, being strewn with small pebbles, and studded with bushes—
137 generally of a thorny species. Round clumps of prickly thistles—which burn like tinder on applying a lighted match—and a few stray tufts of withered grass, only made more desolate the hungry barrenness of the deserts, over which
136 the wind blew with cutting violence, yet they are the home of large herds of guanacos, ostriches, puma, and armadillo, though the latter were at this period comfortably hybernating.

OUT Next morning no horses were visible, and as time went on till ten o'clock without any appearance we all began to suspect Indian treachery. Sam volunteered the remark that if they (the Indians) had played us such a trick, he would go and clear all their animals out the following evening. This threat there was fortunately no occasion for him to put into execution, as the troop proved only to have strayed into
439 another valley. As we were now nearing Santa Cruz, which the last of the Indians were just leaving, having completed their trade and finished all the grog, we saw numerous
202 columns of smoke, caused by their hunting parties. After
OUT passing the broken ground and reaching the high Pampa, Sam and myself rode on ahead, amusing ourselves by fruitlessly chasing guanaco or ostrich, but Sam's dexterity with the bolas was frustrated by his being mounted on a horse belonging to the expedition and unused to this work.
● 133 Towards evening, after again passing numerous salt lagoons, we came to a descent of 300 or 400 feet leading to a valley containing a large salina, and halting, made our fire by the side of a spring, near which, Sam informed me, were the graves of two Indians, which he mentioned with the deepest respect and in an awe-stricken undertone.

OUT Our signal smoke, which was as much to attract Indians as to give the *direction* of our route to Gallegos and J'aria, was soon responded to from the opposite hills on the northern

57 [58] their company this evening was 'Pedro el Platero,' mentioned in Mr. Gardener's mission book; also an old squaw rejoicing in the name of 'La Reina Victoria' (Queen Victoria), who was the occasion of much chaff, my Chilian friends declaring I ought to salute the sovereign of the Pampas in due form; but having obtained a charge and a light for her pipe, all she required, she was soon lost sight of in the dark. We gladly left the camp early the ensuing morning, the cold continuing unabated; the wind blew strong in our faces, and though from the northward, was so keen that Sam and myself kept galloping on and kindling fires at intervals.

● 133 Thus we rode on over a tract of country surpassing in desolation all the districts hitherto traversed. As far as the eye could reach stretched a level waste unrelieved by even an eminence or hollow; the aspect of the low withered shrubs, coarse parched grass, and occasional patches of pebble-strewn ground which for thirty miles wearied the eye with dreary sameness, produced an extraordinary feeling of depression, which was afterwards recalled when journeying through the Travisia, bordering on the Rio Negro, which this district resembles, though on a smaller scale. Occasional frozen lagoons, doubtless supplied by rainfall, only added to the desert aspect of this trackless wilderness. The situation was not improved by Sam pulling up and remarking that he was by no means sure that he had not lost himself. The only variety was afforded by an unlucky fox which we chased till he escaped, as he thought, on the ice of a lagoon, but the treacherous surface gave way, and poor Reynard, after a vigorous struggle, sank out of reach of a lazo. At last, about two o'clock, the desert terminated in a cliff rising from the valley at our feet, and we looked down upon the winding river of the Santa Cruz.

Having waited till the rest came up, we descended by a gorge to the valley, when, after refreshing ourselves by a drink of water, we struck into a trail which followed the river downwards. We were all in high spirits at the prospect of a speedy and felicitous conclusion to our journey; and |33 J'aria was continually questioned as to the distance of the settlement. His answer was invariably 'a league;' and we rode along vainly expecting every moment to see the place, rounding innumerable promontories or points where the barranca advanced into the valley. Each of these projecting cliffs, which stood like outposts of the Pampas, J'aria declared in succession to be the last, Sam all the while maintaining a dignified silence, until at length, at 7.30, when we had almost despaired of ever arriving, we came to the ford opposite the island of the settlement, and a barking of dogs saluted our ears. After Sam had hailed, an answer came back, that if we were going across that night we must look sharp, as the tide was flowing. We accordingly proceeded to cross at once, narrowly escaping having to swim our horses, which on a cold frosty night would have been anything but a pleasant business.

My ideas as to the size and extent of the settlement—and it must be confessed my visions of 'cheerer,' and even of wine, to put some warmth into my chilled frame—were sadly dispelled by the reality; the thriving, though small, town of my imagination being represented by one house, and all wine and liquor proving to have been exhausted. But this was fully made up for by discovering in Mr. Clarke—or, as the Indians called him, 'Clakalaka'—an old acquaintance, whom I had known some years previously in the Falklands. His utter surprise at the sudden appearance of one whom he thought far away may be imagined. But, to my great delight, he thoroughly approved of the proposed excursion. His cordial welcome and hot coffee soon cheered up our spirits, and when warmed and rested we discussed my plans. It appeared that the Indians had not reported wrong as to Don Luiz Buena's movements and the intentions of the northern party; but Mr. Clarke believed that the schooner was still detained in the river mouth waiting for a fair wind, and undertook to send off a messenger to communicate with him: my object

797 and civilisation of the Indians. They resided for some time in 1868 at a spot near Weddell Bluff, about ten miles from the mouth of the river. To quote Mr. Sterling's description,
133 the station[1] was at the mouth of the valley which 'retreats towards the south-west for a considerable distance inland; a stream of pure water flows perennially through it, and a broad belt of grass, offering fine pasture for cattle, gives a cheerful, fertile aspect to the low land; the hills on either side are intersected with ravines, or lift up their bronzed faces out of some intervening dale, and refresh the air with the aroma of shrubs and plants growing everywhere about them.'

This was written after a visit in the summer month of January, and the picture drawn presents the landscape in its fairest colours; very different from its bleak aspect as viewed by myself in the winter. This valley still bears the name of Los Misionarios, but this is the only existing trace of their
797 settlement. Mr. Schmid, however, during his sojourn and journeys with a party of the Indians, compiled a vocabulary of the Tsoneca language, as spoken by the southern Tehuelches. Their plan for establishing trade at Santa Cruz, in order to secure the regular visits of the Indians, was not approved of by the managers of the mission, and they were obliged to abandon the scene of their praiseworthy but unsuccessful efforts—to instruct at least 'the little bright-faced Patagonian children,' of whom they speak in their journals with warm affection.

439 The counter attractions of rum supplied by a trader who visited the river were felt by Mr. Schmid to be very destructive of his influence, but it cannot be doubted that their store, if established, would have had no chance against any rival that supplied rum to his customers; for though there are many exceptions, the Indians too eagerly expend the spoils of their hunting and industry in liquor. Their wives, however, when they accompany them, take care to manage their business with discretion, and reserve sufficient stock

[1] [i.e. Santa Cruz trading station--Analyst]

000 discovered smoke behind a clump of trees, and, to our great delight, there was our friend before a good fire, nicely sheltered from snow and wind, within an arbour neatly cut out of a bush. We adjourned to the fire and had breakfast; invigorated by which, and encouraged by a lull in the storm, we started off to renew the chase, but soon got separated by the thick snow-storm. Mr. Clarke, El Sourdo, Gonzalez, and myself, who were together, came close upon a herd of guanaco, making for the coast to escape the gale. The dogs gave chase and killed some, others were balled; in fact a regular slaughter took place, and eight or ten carcases were soon lying on the plain. Now came the tedious job of cutting up. I found myself standing alone by a dead guanaco, none of the others being visible, though not fifty yards distant. I proceeded as best I could to arrange the meat, and was about half through the task, with fingers nearly frozen, when I discovered Mr. Clarke and El Sourdo, and shortly after it cleared up, and the remainder of our party, all loaded with meat, arrived. Thus supplied, we turned our faces homewards, and arrived at Santa Cruz a little before sundown, where a steaming kettle of coffee soon dispelled our cold and put us into good spirits.

● 133 Mr. Darwin and Admiral Fitzroy have thoroughly described the configuration of the Valley of Santa Cruz and its surroundings, so that a lengthened attempt to portray it is not necessary. I would particularly refer the reader to the accurate and picturesque description by the former of the bench formation which causes the western part of the environs of the river to present the appearance of the shores of former successive estuaries—of a vast river or fiord.

Near the settlement the ascent of the Southern Barranca immediately leads to a level plain extending for the space of a couple of miles; then there is another rise of perhaps fifty feet, and another plain, which extends for about the space of a league to a range of successive ridges, which we called the Blue Hills from their peculiar appearance on clear days.

These, eastwards, lose their elevations, and merge into the 133
undulations of the high Pampa and a rolling cheerless waste of stones, coarse grass, and incense bushes; its uneven surface often traversed by ravines running in various directions. Amongst these hills there is a large lagoon which Casimiro informed me he used to visit whilst residing with the missionaries for the purpose of procuring wild fowl, of [134]
which there were then great numbers, but they had latterly given up this resort. There are other lagoons scattered at intervals in the before-mentioned plains, which, during the winter, were frozen, and the beautifully smooth ice often caused Mr. Clarke and myself to long for a pair of skates; indeed we tried to manufacture a pair, but without success.

Towards the sea coast from the Blue Hills the slope 133
appears gradual, until nearing the coast, when the plain is 136
intersected by gullies and deep fertile valleys, which render hunting very tedious work, as it is necessary to trust almost entirely to the dogs. Game abounds in this direction, especially during the winter. We made numerous excursions up river, generally staying away from the settlement three or four days, our favourite rendezvous being a place about sixty miles distant, called 'Chickrookaik,' marked by Fitzroy as an Indian Ford or Pass of the river Santa Cruz, which statement both El Sourdo and Casimiro confirmed. At this point the river narrows considerably, and on the south side there are steep cliffs almost overhanging the water, a cave in which cliffs was always a sure find for a puma. Both above and below this point are large wide plains extending from the 'banks' or cliffs to the river, which may easily be encircled; and the game being hemmed in between the horsemen and the river are readily captured. Sometimes the ostriches take to the water, but in the winter this saves trouble, as their legs get frozen, and on landing they are unable to move. We made an excursion on one occasion some miles higher up the river, and found abundance of game. We had previously on our road had good luck,

133 but, as is often the custom, left the slain animals concealed
136 in bushes, with a poncho or something over them. During the interval of our absence severe weather set in, and on returning to examine our caches the foxes and birds of prey had accounted for the meat. The foxes are a great trouble to the hunters, as, frequently, whilst they are encircling the herds of guanaco, and taking the greatest care to keep out of sight, one of these brutes will jump up, the dogs give chase, and then good-bye to all chance of sport. Fitzroy remarked the number of guanaco bones found in his ascent of the river Santa Cruz, which appear to have puzzled him,
[illegible] but the cause is not far to seek. During the very severe winters which occur I believe about once in three years, these animals, finding no pasture on the high lands, which are covered with snow, are necessarily driven down to the plains fringing the river, where they die from starvation. There is also a disease prevalent amongst them something similar to scab in sheep. On one occasion a hunting party killed ten guanacos, all of which were scabby, or, as we called it, 'sanoso;' and, consequently, unfit for food. Mr. Clarke told me that after one severe winter he found ostriches lying in heaps, dead under the bushes, and also guanacos. The difficulty of getting the horses across the swift and deep stream, with its banks encumbered by ice, prevented us from making frequent excursions to the northern side of the river. A level plain extends from the banks for about a mile, bounded by a chain of irregular hills; near the foot of these I picked up many specimens of a spiral shell, apparently a Turritella, which appeared to have been vitrified; and some were as translucent as glass, and of different colours. Beyond these hills rolled a succession of uneven plains diversified by ridges and hills; the general slope of the ground being apparently from west to east, and the hills towards the west often assumed the form of abrupt lofty cliffs. Near a laguna at the foot of a cliff a hundred feet high I found boulders incrusted with sulphate of iron, such as had been

2-Masters T-5 (1869-1870)1873

SH5 Tehuelche SH5

pointed out to me in the Falklands, and numerous oyster 133
shells and other marine shells occured in various localities. 136
There are no streams, but frequent lagoons in the hollows,
and surrounded by a luxuriant growth of incense bushes.
The unbroken plains abound in round thistle, califate, and [137]
the curious shrub called 'ratstail,' from the appearance of its
twigs when the thick bark is pulled off. When burned it
emits a dense black resinous smoke. To the north the horizon is bounded by a lofty range of hills which form the
barrier of the valley of the Rio Chico, about sixty miles
distant. These northern hills abound with puma, some of
which, killed in our hunts, were of unusual size, measuring
fully six feet exclusive of the tail, which is generally
half the length of the body. They are, of course, most 136
numerous where the herds of guanaco and the ostriches
abound; in the southern part of Patagonia their colour is
more of a greyish-brown than that of the species found in
the Argentine Provinces. These 'Leones,' as they are
universally called in South America, always appeared to me
to be the most cat-like of all the felidæ. They are very
timid, always running from a man on horseback, and, by
day at least, from a pedestrian; they run for a short distance
in a series of long bounds, at great speed, but soon tire and
stand at bay behind or in the midst of a bush, and sitting
upon their haunches, spit and swear just like a monstrous
tabby; sometimes endeavouring to scratch with their formidable claws, but rarely springing at the pursuer. Mr.
Clarke on one occasion had his mantle torn off in this
manner. At another time, when hunting in the vicinity of
Santa Cruz, I observed from a distance Gonzalez hacking
with his knife at a big incense bush, and on reaching the spot
found him occupied in clearing away branches to allow him
to knock a huge puma on the head with his bolas. He was
dismounted and attended by his dogs, which bayed the animal.
Still, had the puma not been a cur, he could doubtless have
sprung out and killed or severely wounded the gaucho.

361 As I saw no reason to believe this story, I declined to comply with the proposal of Casimiro, who, having consoled himself by begging a little coffee, took his departure, and the encampment was reduced to the toldo, of which I was to consider myself an inmate, and another, belonging to the only Indians who remained—Tankelow, Orkeke's brother, and his son, a youth of about eighteen. Besides these, there
609 were three of the Chilian deserters who as narrated had escaped from Punta Arena; one was attached to the household of Tankelow, and the other two to that of Orkeke. One of these was Arica, already mentioned, who being a very clever worker in hide, had employed himself in adorning saddles and bridles for the Indians, by which he had acquired a pretty good stock of gear. The condition of all three was, however, not enviable. They had lowered themselves at first by volunteering to discharge the drudgery of fetching wood and water, and by this time were little better than slaves, obliged to perform the menial offices, which before
294 had been the task of the women. These, fair creatures, headed by Mrs. Orkeke—a young woman almost six feet in height, and displaying a corresponding breadth across the shoulders—employed themselves in cutting out and sewing guanaco mantles, weaving fillets for the head, and chattering.
000 Tankelow and his son presently started for a hunt; but as I was not offered a mount, and deemed it more reasonable to give my only charger a good rest and feed, I could only accompany them to the river, the frozen surface of which they crossed, and disappeared up a cañon that led up the barranca, on the northern limit of the valley, to the Upper Pampa. Having wistfully watched them, I reconnoitred the
133 valley of the Rio Chico. Behind me, to the south-east, the river wound through plains covered with withered coarse grass, some eighteen inches high, extending on either bank for several miles till terminated by the rising barranca. Snow lay here and there in patches on some of the higher ground, and increased the dreariness of the prospect. About

two leagues below the river divided into two branches, which 133
reunited beyond an island of some extent. Looking up river
in a north-westerly direction, the valley soon narrowed in,
the southern barrancas sloping down to within a couple of
miles of our camp; and the view was closed by two remarkable
hills resembling fortresses, which seemed to stand on
guard on either side. I made a slight sketch of the outlines of
the view, which forms the background of the hunting scene.*
Having strolled back to the toldo, I was greeted by the [276]
women with the usual demand, 'Mon aniwee'—Anglicè,
'Lend us the pipe,' which was duly charged and handed
round. We then sat and watched the proceedings of Keoken, 657
Tankelow's pretty little daughter, just budding into womanhood,
and a small boy to whom I gave the name of Captain
John, who were amusing themselves by catching and riding
some of the horses which were tamer than the others. The
urchins soon grew tired of their equestrian feats; and,
prompted by the spirit of mischief, which seems ever to
haunt children, and especially Indian boys, came and begged
a match of me. Not suspecting their purpose, I gave them
the coveted prize, with which they hurried off in high delight,
and in a very few minutes had set fire to the rank, withered
herbage, some distance off the toldo, but to the windward.
The conflagration was at first unnoticed by us; but at dusk,
when Tankelow returned from hunting, with a supply of
meat, it was palpably dangerous. So all hands had to set
to work, and by dint of tearing up the grass, with great
trouble we stopped its progress, which if aided by a breeze
in the night would very probably otherwise have consumed
the toldo and endangered the inmates. Of the culprits no
notice was taken, the occurrence being apparently regarded
as all in the day's work. After our supper off guanaco
meat, and a smoke, I turned in, and slept soundly on my [513]
Tehuelche bed of hides and bolsters which had been carefully
arranged by the tall hostess.

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* Frontispiece.

2: Musters T-3 (1869-1870)1873
SHS Tehuelche SHS
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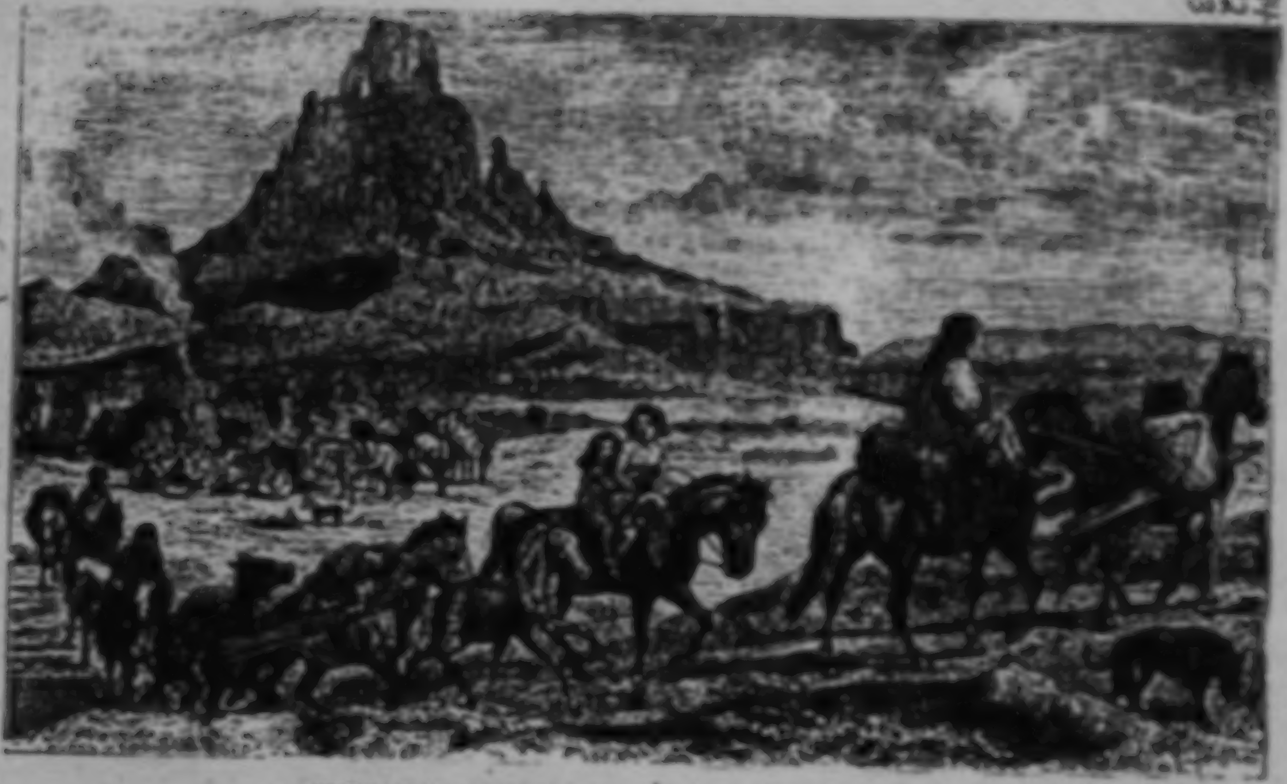
[facing p 79]



START FROM THE CAMP AT NÓWAISH OR WINDOW HILL.

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our routine of hunting, as we made our way slowly up the valley
132 of the Rio Chico, which was still frozen over. The weather was cold, and occasional showers of snow accompanied the strong piercing westerly winds which blew every day. The
● 133 valley sometimes opened out into wide grass-covered plains, dotted with incense-bushes, then rose again in huge bare ridge and barrow-like undulations. Occasionally there occurred patches of swampy ground with frozen lagoons, and here and there open springs, the resort of numerous waterfowl. The hills on the northern side appeared bare and rugged, rising abruptly out of irregular forms, while the southern heights were lower, and presented more of the steep declivities known as barrancas, interrupted at intervals by high rugged hills of basalt, often assuming the appearance of ruined castles, closing in at the bends of the winding river. To one of these—a remarkable hill under which we were encamped on August [illegible], about 120 miles from Santa Cruz—I gave the name of Sierra Ventana, from a window-like opening through its peak; the Indians called it Mówaish. (See Illustration.) In many places the bases of these hills were formed entirely of a description of lava, and one of the Chilians informed me that whilst passing over a ridge, he had observed several large masses of pure iron: this, how-
[135] ever, I was inclined to disbelieve, as although farther up the country iron ore exists in large quantities, I only observed in this part a species of ore similar to that common at Drobak, in Norway.

202 On one occasion, while marching, we observed smoke in our rear, which was thought to be caused either by a messenger in search of us announcing the arrival of the schooner, or else by a party of the Southern Indians who had some idea of marching north. However, no scout was sent back to discover the truth, so we remained in ignorance. On the
137 26th we halted, and encamped by the side of the river in a
262 broad opening of the valley: here there was a lagoon, not completely frozen, in which grew a description of flag, of

881 535 heads grotesquely on either side to the beats of the drum, retired for a short time to rest themselves, after which they appeared again and danced a different step. When that was over, four more appeared, and so on, until every one, including the boys, had had a fling. Sometimes, to give greater effect, the performers carried a bunch of rushes in one hand. About nine P.M., everybody having had enough, Casimiro gave the sign. The band stopped playing, and all retired to bed. The dancing was not ungraceful, but was rendered grotesque by the absurd motions of the head. It was strictly confined to the men, the women being only allowed to look on.

● 133 On the second day's march from the scene of my first Indian ball we crossed a rocky ridge abounding with a description of vesicular lava; the ridge ran out from the southern limits of the valley and terminated in precipitous cliffs, round the base of which wound the river. The surface of the ridge was fissured in many places with deep chasms like Alpine crevasses, on the brink of one of which my horse stopped just in time to escape a fall. The caravan had gone a more circuitous route to take advantage of the lowest and easiest crest. On the other side of the ridge the valley suddenly spread out to the extent of several miles, and on the western horizon a line of snowy peaks was visible, their summits capped with clouds: this was our first view of the Cordillera. The low ground was cut up by streams and small lakelets of water, formed by the overflow of a small fork of the river, which glistening in the afternoon sunshine presented a beautiful silvery appearance, very refreshing to the eye wearied with alternate gazing on withered 484 grass and black volcanic rocks. However beautiful to look at, this scene would clearly prove difficult travelling, so a halt was called, and our course debated on; ultimately it was resolved to cross the river and encamp on the northern bank, where the ground was higher and free from floods, so loads were carefully adjusted, and children transferred to the arms of the men, to give the women more freedom of action;

baggage-horses were also taken in tow by the young men, 464 and Casimiro and another volunteering to lead the van and act as pilots, we proceeded to make our way to the river-bank, which rose by a gradual elevation from the lower inundated plain. After much floundering about in water-holes, and various spills, which caused great merriment, especially when Mrs. Orkeke and all her gear came down by the run, an iron kettle of which she was very proud clattering down so as to frighten several of the horses into what threatened to become a general stampede, the bank was safely reached; the river was swollen high, and its rapid current running six or seven miles an hour, was bringing down huge sharp-edged masses of ice. It seemed almost impossible for the women and baggage animals to cross. However, Orkeke, taking a long pole to sound with, led the way, and by watching their opportunity to dodge the floating ice, which cut the horses' and riders' legs cruelly, all got safely over. A wilder scene could hardly be imagined—dogs howling on the bank fearing to pass, women singing out to their various friends and relations, and here and there an adventurous Indian, who scorned to go by the ford with the rest, disappearing for a second in the river, horse and all, but ultimately emerging some distance down the stream. The water was bitterly cold, as may be imagined, and the piercing wind benumbed our dripping bodies; so on arriving at the north bank, where there were some small sandy hillocks, we kindled a large fire, and had a warm and a smoke whilst the women were employed pitching the toldos. It had been decided to remain here some days and then proceed to the vicinity of the Cordillera for the purpose of catching wild horses. But, as will be seen shortly, 'L'homme propose et Dieu dispose.' Looking /33 up towards the Cordillera from our encampment, the valley appeared to expand a few miles up into one immense plain, and the Indians informed me that before reaching the mountains there is a great drop or basin where the wild horses are found. This was probably, at the period of our visit, a vast

33 sheet of water from the melting snows. Lake Viedma lies some miles to the southward from the head of the valley, and I should be inclined to think that the course of the Rio Chico, which undoubtedly flows from it, would be found to come from the south to north, and bend easterly at the head of the valley, where it unites the numerous streams as described by Viedma in his journey in 1780. I am also inclined to think that Viedma being taken twice across the Rio Chico mistook the river at the second crossing for another, which he has marked as the Chalia, a name, by the way, unknown to the Indians, save as applied to an unsavoury parasite only too common among them. The follow-
578 ing morning, September 2, we were sitting quietly round the fire discussing a breakfast of boiled ostrich prepared by the lady of the house, when suddenly the clash of knives was heard, and we saw two Indians, destitute of mantles, with naked swords in their hands, run across from Camillo's to Crimé's toldo. In a minute everything was in an uproar; arms were produced, guns and revolvers loaded, and some of
[714] the Indians equipped themselves in coats of mail, and others, with the assistance of the women, padded themselves about the chest and upper part of the body with thick blankets and corechillas or saddle-cloths. Knowing what was about to happen, the women, and with them all the Chilian deserters, except one, beat a retreat to a safe distance from the toldos. Having assumed my arms, and feeling thoroughly mystified as to the real cause of this excitement, I went to Camillo's toldo, where the scene explained itself. He was lying on his bed dead, with a frightful gash in his side, having been murdered by Cuastro, one of the Indians whom we had seen running to Crimé's tents. On issuing from the toldo Casimiro met me, and asked for a revolver, as he had no firearms, and I lent him one accordingly. The Indians showed by their changed countenance all the fury of fight; their very complexions seemed ghastly, and their eyes glared and rolled, seeming to see blood. The two opposing parties

the wound and bandaged it with cold water bandages, which 578 appeared to be successful, as in a few days it inconvenienced him but little. Thence proceeding to Casimiro's toldo—the smallest I ever saw—I got him to cover my saddle with a guanaco skin I had obtained on the road. The children appeared to be the only members of the party unaffected by the prevailing gloom. They had found a snow-bank in a nook, and amused themselves sliding down it on a bit of wood *à la Russe*. This evening things looked very black again. A consultation was held in Orkeke's toldo, and although it was carried on in a low tone, and I was little conversant with the Tehuelche tongue, I heard my name frequently mentioned in connection with a revolver, and also the Chilians. I was much puzzled at what was going on, but as Mrs. Orkeke brought me some supper in the most gracious and smiling manner, did not trouble myself more than to overhaul my arms quietly, and see they were ready for use. I subsequently found out that a plot had been set on foot amongst the Chilians to rise, rob, and murder the Indians, and escape with the horses. Some, however, my informant among the number, refused to join. The Indians, who are naturally quick-sighted, had conceived a suspicion that all was not right, and were debating whether it would not be better to kill the Chilians at once, before they became more troublesome; but Casimiro prevailed on them to let them remain until they did something to necessitate their destruction; and so they escaped for the present.

September 5th, at an early hour, we were awoke by 183 Orkeke's marching harangue; and after coasting the hills bordering the valley for a few miles, bade adieu to the valley of the Rio Chico, and struck into a gorge of the northern hills, leading into an uneven valley lying between low irregular hills of decomposed lava, which we followed, passing several small lagoons in the lower hollows, around which there was invariably a yellow description of clay. The hills were everywhere covered with scrub, and presented a wild, bleak appearance, the grey rocks only appearing here and there. After some hours' travelling through this dismal district in a north-west course, we emerged on a large plain at the western side, bounded by a range of hills 1,000 feet high, forming a spur of the Cordillera. The weather was stormy, and we could only catch occasional glimpses, through the driving clouds and snow-storms, of the loftier peaks of the more distant mountains. Our expedition in search of wild horses was, of course, after the recent trouble, abandoned; and forced marches, to escape the Southern Indians, in the event of their following from Santa Cruz, were the order of the day. Hunting, however, was resumed by the unwounded, and several ostriches were caught during the day. Towards evening the encampment was fixed near a lagoon, the environs of which were barren, and destitute of anything except a small low shrub which served as firewood. Although the wind was northerly, it was bitterly cold; and as I had for some days past adopted the native costume—keeping my 'store clothes' stowed away under charge of Mrs. Orkeke—I felt it exceedingly. The 6th, 7th, and 8th of September were occupied in making forced marches northward, accompanied by the usual hunting; and although both parties continued armed, and appeared to be rather suspicious of each other, things went on pretty smoothly. The country traversed on the 6th and 7th was a large arid plain, dotted with a few stunted shrubs, enclosed by the before-mentioned spur of the Cordillera on the western side, and on the east by a low [35] range of sandy-looking hills. The whole of this plain was strewn with small pebbles of porphyry, quartz, silicia, and obsidian; also with small pieces of silicified wood. On the 8th we crossed the spur by a pass walled on either hand with rocks of vesicular lava. Here we halted for a quarter of an hour, and every one broke off pieces of stone suitable for making hand-balls for bolas. The descent on the western side was no easy matter; the declivity being strewn with large masses of rock and loose boulders, and the wind blowing bitterly cold, and with such force that some of the 133 women's horses could hardly face it. Ultimately all managed to reach a spacious elevated pampa, on the western side of which, some fifteen leagues off, rose the Cordillera of the Andes. In the pass I observed several large pieces of obsidian, so clear and peculiarly round-shaped that I at first imagined that a demijohn had been carried thither by some previous party and broken. Of this the women gathered some pieces, to serve as scrapers for cleaning guanaco skins. We traversed the usual barren high pampa—interspersed with low shrubs, coarse grass, and here and there an incense bush of considerable size, which afforded a moment's shelter from the cutting wind—for some distance, till we at length reached a cliff, below which lay a grassy plain, watered by a small, rapid stream. About thirty miles in the background were visible the lofty mountains of the Cordillera. The inviting appearance of the pasture determined us to remain for a couple of days to rest the horses, after the unusually long marches of the preceding days. The following day was occupied chiefly in making hand-balls for bolas from the soft porous stone obtained in the rocky pass. Towards noon a frightful gale of wind sprang up, which blew down most of the toldos; but ours, thanks to the strength of arm of Mrs. Orkeke, who had securely fixed the poles, remained firm, only one or two of the poles being broken. The river, here flowing in an eastward direction, was the first stream met with since leaving the valley of the Rio Chico. In the descent to it, the bench formation, although recognisable, was not so much marked as in many of the other rivers. After two days' rest we resumed our journey; and having traversed the grassy valley for, perhaps, a mile, ascended a slight ridge to a higher plain of the usual sterile nature, in which the first ostrich eggs met with were found. Our course was directed nearly north-west, to a range of hills 800 feet in height; on their summit was a plateau strewn with large stones and rocks.

133 We formed another hunt, in which numerous ostriches and several pumas were killed. From the western side of the plateau we overlooked a large plain, extending to the immediate vicinity of the mountains, but near the side of which there appeared to be a cutting or steep descent, just like a railway embankment. As it had been announced in the cacique's address that we were to encamp near a spring on the eastern side, and I had killed an ostrich, which, after giving a sharp run of half a mile, had been turned by the cavalcade of women, I proceeded in company with Casimiro and another to have some dinner. We accordingly selected a bush, cooked and ate our bird, and at the conclusion of our meal mounted and proceeded to where we expected to find the encampment. But, arriving at the spot, we found nobody, and looking over the plain we caught a glimpse of a belated woman just vanishing down the cutting above mentioned. We accordingly followed, and an hour's gallop brought us up with the remainder. The sun had set, but the light of a young moon enabled us to make our way to the second bench. I may say the formation altogether much resembled that of the river Cuheyli; but the river which flowed in this valley was of small size, although, as we found, the banks were boggy and almost impracticable. The moon had by this time set, and after a considerable deal of confusion in the dark, all got across, and night being far advanced encamped about a mile to the northward. When daylight enabled us to examine the locality, we found ourselves in a valley walled in by lofty abrupt cliffs on both sides, while a stream—bordered by marshes, containing numerous snipe
[136] and teal—flowed swiftly down the centre of the glen. To the north the valley appeared to bend westwards, so having nothing to do, I strolled up to the turn and found that the high cliffs ceased, and were replaced by the ordinary steep barrancas, covered from the top to the bottom with incense-bushes. The valley nowhere exceeded a mile in width, and the gloom and oppressive effect of the prison-like walls of

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cliff rendered it by no means a desirable place of abode, but 133
the pasture skirting the marsh was green and luxuriantly tender. While I was endeavouring to secure some ducks 000
and teal with the bolas, two of the Chilians came up searching for firewood. They bitterly bewailed their lot in having to work and slave for a parcel of savages, but finally forgot their grievances in a slumber under a bush. Not caring to be supposed to have been in their company, I returned to the camp, and examined the rocks, which were different to those previously observed, showing in many places granite, with schistose veins, and what appeared to be a species of grey marble. A stay was made in this place of some four days, and would have been longer, but that on the third day some of the party, chiefly boys, who had strolled away a short distance, balling small birds, came in with the news that Indians
l were coming from the south. A scout was immediately sent out, horses brought up, and arms got ready. Casimiro came to me for a supply of cartridges for the revolver, saying, 'Now we shall have to fight; for if those Southern Indians beat us, they will spare neither man, woman, nor child.' This was cheering news, seeing that the odds were likely to be about ten to one against our side. However, just as we were mounting, the scout returned with the news that he had found no traces of Indians; the supposed enemy being only a troop of guanaco coming down to water. Cayuke, on its being ascertained that there was really no danger, had one of his horses killed as a thank-offering; the meat of course being distributed for food amongst his friends. There is in 526
this place, which is called by the Indians 'Amakaken,' a large spherical boulder of marble, which it is the custom of the Indians to try their strength by lifting. Casimiro informed me that this stone had been there for many years, and the custom was very old. It was so large and heavy that I was just able to grasp it with both arms, and raise it to the level of my knees, but some of the Indians managed to lift it to their shoulders. The night subsequent to the false alarm, 000

000 snow fell heavily, notwithstanding which on the following day the Indians, who did not appear to feel secure, marched again in a northerly direction. Before quitting this valley, 252 I was fortunate enough to find an ostrich nest with four eggs in it, which we devoured later on, cooked in the ashes by the simple method of placing the egg upright, with a hole broken in the upper surface, through which a piece of stick is inserted to stir round the yolk and white, a little salt being thrown in, and the egg turned to ensure all sides being equally done; the result being an omelette in the shell of most appetising flavour, but a novice in this cookery is apt 133 to burn his fingers in turning the egg. Towards night we entered a dark and gloomy gorge, winding amongst fantastic and confused cliffs and peaked hills, thrown together in utterly chaotic confusion, which appeared to form a barrier east and west. But it was impossible accurately to distinguish the line, so inextricably were the heights jumbled together. My powers of description are utterly inadequate to convey the idea of the formless irregularity of this region of rocky hills.

At a late hour we encamped in a glen, or corrie, apparently without a second outlet, and walled in by frowning cliffs, down the midst of which a torrent foamed in a rocky channel. All the next day our march continued through a barren desert of rocks, frequently intersected by deep ravines with precipitous cliffs, the faces of which in many places displayed beds of red and yellow ochre, visible at a great distance. From some of these the women, after a scramble, replenished their supplies of paint. The whole face of this district was torn and tossed, as if by tremendous explosive force; and, except in some deep-lying clay bottoms, where an occasional shallow lagoon was to be met with, the track was waterless; snow lay on the heights and in some places on the ground traversed by our march, in the course of which a number of the large ibises, called in Chili bandurria (Theristicus melanopis), were seen. The nature of the country rendered hunting laborious and

useless. Tankelow, however, found an ostrich and nest, the 133
eggs from which, about thirty in number, he, according to [222]
Indian custom, divided among those who came up before
they were removed from the nest; among these lucky individuals
was myself; for, seeing him mak[illegible] the spot, and
the male bird get up, and being moreover, well mounted
and exceedingly hungry, I was among the first arrivals.
Far away to the right of our track, extending thirty or forty
miles eastward, lies a district called by the Indians 'The
Devil's Country,' which, they assured me, is never entered,
probably from the barren and impracticable nature of the
surface, which seems, from description, to be even worse than
the wilderness traversed by us. Beyond this district there 133
is a practicable track, sometimes followed by the Indians, 487
leading northward, probably used as a route to the Chupat;
but from that line to the sea the country is so impassable
that the Indians say it would require two years to proceed
by the sea-coast from Santa Cruz to the Rio Negro. The
existence of such tracks as these, and the desolate Travisias
encountered near the coast, have probably caused Patagonia
to be described as an arid, almost waterless country; but, in
reality, after passing the coast barrier most of the interior
abounds in lagoons, springs, and frequent streams; and, even
in the Travisias, the numerous wild animals met with show
that water exists.

Towards evening we left the snow behind us; and descending 133
a lofty hill, which had bounded our view all day,
came to a large swelling down, from which the prospect was
far more encouraging. Rolling plains extended to the north
and north-east, whilst the Cordillera rose like a wall on the
western side. This hill is called by the Indians 'God's Hill;' [773]
and the tradition, as communicated by Casimiro, relates that
from this spot the Great Spirit dispersed the animals which
he had made in the caverns. But some of the animals must
have remained behind, as, out on the lower slope of the
downs, two pumas were chased and killed. An hour's ride

133 over a sandy plain brought us to a valley with a stream flowing through beautifully green pastures. This was the spot chosen for our encamping, and some of the women were already busy planting the poles that form the skeleton of the toldos; so, turning my horse adrift, I started down to the stream, and after the luxury of a bath, lay down and smoked until the toldos were thoroughly arranged. The following day a short march was made, in a north-west direction, to a valley containing better pasture; here it was
224 intended to give the horses much-needed repose. Meanwhile, however, meat fell short, so a circle was organised: my horse was too tired; but Orkeke, seeing me standing
[231] unprepared, said, 'Ask Ako (his pet dog, and adopted child, and in virtue of his office the owner of several horses) to lend you a horse.' As Ako had no objection I was soon mounted, and started for the chase in high spirits. On our previous journey we had remarked numerous tracks of what appeared to be ostrich near the ground where our present circle was to be formed (viz., in the direction of the Cordillera), and all expected to find plenty of game. The circle was formed, myself going as one pointsman; and, after arriving at the point, I watched anxiously for some time, but the only animal that appeared was a male guanaco, which as he did not see me crouched behind an incense-bush, until he came within shot, I successfully balled and killed. After waiting a little longer, and the Indians being moderately near at hand, I changed my position a few hundred yards, to a more likely spot; but no animals appeared, so I proceeded in search of Orkeke, whom I shortly discovered smoking on the top of a small eminence. After the pipe had been passed in silence, I asked him what he had killed. 'Nothing,' was the answer; 'let's wait and see; perhaps some other Indian has an ostrich.' A careful survey, however, failed to discover any one so lucky, although several had killed guanaco. So we retired to where my dead guanaco lay uncovered: at our approach two or three condors rose

heavily up; and shortly about twenty or thirty more spread 224
their huge wings, sailed away, and perched on a neighbouring rock. As for the guanaco, in the short half hour of my absence it had been literally torn to pieces; so, after extracting and eating the marrow-bones, we returned to camp, on our way capturing two armadillos. During the past day or 132
two the temperature had considerably risen; the wind, though westerly, was mild and genial, and the Indians affirmed that farther north it would be so warm that I should require some covering for the head. We found on our return that 000
Arica during our absence had gone off somewhere on foot. As he had that morning asked and obtained some tobacco from me, it seemed probable that he had determined to attempt to make his way alone to reach civilisation at some point or other. During our stay in this valley Casimiro 202
requested me to write a letter for him to the commandante at the Rio Negro, inquiring whether the Argentine Government still allowed him his ration and pay as a lieut.-colonel in their service. I also wrote some letters to my friends, but without much hope of their being 'mailed;' though Casimiro assured me that when we joined the Northern Indians they would forward them to the Araucanos, whence they might go on by the people who went to Rio Negro to fetch the chief's allowance of cattle; remote, however, as were all these contingencies, still it was a pleasure to write. We 133
quitted the valley after three days' rest, during which Arica had not appeared, and he was concluded either to have fallen a prey to a puma, or to have gone off on his own account. We journeyed all day over a rough hilly country, encumbered with large stones and occasional patches of scrub of considerable height; ostriches abounded, and large quantities of eggs were found. During a long march of about thirty miles no water was seen until we reached the camp at sunset, situated in a cañon; but along the route an occasional patch of snow sufficed to quench our thirst. As I rode along in company 521
with an Indian named 'Tchang,' he began asking me ques-

521 tions: first, 'Who is cacique of the English?' I explained to him that it was Her Gracious Majesty. 'Is she married?' 'She is a widow.' 'Has she any children, and how many? Has she lots of horses and mares and silver ornaments?' And so on until I had satisfied him; after which he rode along, repeating, 'A woman cacique! A woman cacique! Four sons and five daughters! Lots of horses, mares, sheep,
764 and cattle!' On the 22nd of September we left the encampment in the cañon about sunrise, and, mounting the ridge on the north side, halted close to the grave of an Indian; the broad and high cairn of stones erected over it denoting him to have been a cacique of importance, which fact was communicated to me in a low whisper by Wáki. Here a fire was made, and a few stones added to the pile. Whilst
133 the Indians were warming themselves the sun rose, and the view of the Cordillera, seen through the clear atmosphere, with the sun's first rays illuminating the snowy mountain summits with a roseate flush was magnificent. We pursued our route over sandy plains, crossed at intervals by shallow streams of water, and halted near some lagoons in a place called by the Indians 'Kinck.'

[262] The following day we marched again, hunting as usual on the way. A fat ostrich at this time of the year was a rarity, but eggs abounded, and formed the main staple of food; and the armadillos were also getting into condition, and assisted to furnish a repast at the camp fire. On the 27th we arrived at a place named 'Gelgel,' situated on the banks of a rapid river, probably that debouching at Port Desire. This was the point of divergence from the northern route to Patagones for any party proceeding to hunt in the western plains.
202 During our stay in Gelgel we hunted in the surrounding country, and on several occasions observed columns of smoke to the south, as if made by a party approaching. These at last appeared nearer, and as no distinct answer was made to our signal fires, scouts were sent out, but returned with no information, one, however, asserting that he had found the

574 strange to say, it never moved from the spot where it was
164 unsaddled, and the Indian during the time he remained in
the toldo neither ate nor drank. At the end of three days he
mounted his mule, which appeared as fresh as when he
arrived, and rode away to the northward. On the following
day, whilst hunting, a sickness struck the Indians—some
falling dead from their horses, while others, though able to
return home, only survived a short time. As is usual when
[361 disease breaks out, the toldos were removed to some distance
751] from each other, to escape infection, but many men, women,
and children died.' Of the fact that a plague or sickness
did cause the death of many Indians within a few days at
some encampment in these plains, I received further and
reliable confirmation, my informant, who was in the party,
stating that the Pampa tribe was decimated.

● 133 In the cliffs above the river on the eastern side of our encampment I observed many balls of sandstone of various sizes. On breaking one in two, a piece of what seemed to be ironstone formed a nucleus, around which layers of sand appeared to have been aggregated. By what process these balls could have been formed was to me a mystery; but they proved very handy for bolas, only requiring to be slightly reduced in size. Hunting to the westward from the encampment, we came across several muddy, or rather clayey bogs, into one of which, when in full pursuit of an ostrich, I rode, and my horse sank deep, throwing his rider a complete summersault; and with much ado I first picked up myself, and then with greater difficulty extricated my horse from the tenacious morass.

000 After Arica's return, the Chilians manifested a restless spirit, and frequently asked me the direction of the Chupat settlement. I replied that it lay about 150 leagues to the E.N.E. from this point, as far as I could judge; but that it would be better for them to remain with the Indians, and do the women's work of providing wood and water, &c., than to start off into a wild and dreary pampa, where they

252 In the hunt not less than pumas were killed, which were, as usual at this time, very fat, and were duly boiled in the iron pots, furnishing an excellent supper, the meat closely resembling boiled pork. 576 During the day seven of the Chilians were missed, and on our arrival at the toldos, it transpired that they had determined to try and find their own way to the Chupat settlement; and as they had left in an underhand manner, which the Indians look upon as tantamount to a declaration of war, some of the people wished to pursue and kill them, but this 133 proposition was overruled by Orkeke and Casimiro. The en[136]campment was sheltered by a hill named 'Tele,' close to a large lagoon covered with waterfowl, into which flowed a beautiful spring issuing from the hill; along the margin of the clear pure water grew a profusion of a sort of green cress, and at sunset flights of flamingoes (Phœnicopterus tgnipallo) and rose-coloured spoonbills (Platalea ajaja) came to the lagoon to feed. One day's hunting was done in the surrounding plain, which to the west presents several of the remarkable drops, or basin-like formations described by Darwin as existing on the eastern side of the Cordillera. On October 5th we broke up the camp and marched in a northerly direction, until a stream of considerable size was arrived at; this some of us crossed at once, although it was deep and the banks rotten and unsound. The women and remainder of the party diverged to a ford, old Orkeke sending one of the Chilians to take care that his little dog (on whom he lavished his paternal affections) did not get wet. In half an hour's time the whole party—Ako included—had crossed in safety, and the camp was pitched on a peninsula between this river and another which joined it lower down. The united streams may or may not form a tributary of the Chupat, as the Indians disagreed on this point, some averring it to be so, others stating that the river flowed into a large lagoon. The weather had changed into drizzling rain, and the wet and sloppy state of the toldos was very disagreeable. It 291 did not, however, much affect our clothing, as it is easy to

dry a guanaco mantle by the fire, but care must be taken 291 only to expose the furred side to the heat, otherwise the hide will become dried and apt to tear easily. Whilst in 133 this encampment look-outs were posted, and one came in stating that he had seen smoke in a northerly direction. Consequently on October 9, having rested our jaded horses, which were rapidly improving in condition, from grazing on the young green grass now springing abundantly in all the valleys, we crossed a barren, clayey pampa, interspersed with bogs and marshes at intervals, and on the 10th arrived at a small range of hills, running east and west, under one of which the toldos were pitched, near to another of those beautiful circular springs which frequently occur in Patagonia; from the centre of the smooth white sand which formed the bottom, the water bubbled up like liquid crystal, and silvery fishes could be seen darting about in the circular basin. The Indians delight in laving their hands and feet in the springs, and will sit there for a long time admiring the beauty of these 'eyes of the desert.' As, on our arrival, the women had not yet completed the domestic arrangements, after throwing the spoils of the chase off our saddles, a party of us ascended an adjacent hill to have a look round. The day was magnificent, and the sun, just setting, bathed the whole country in a flood of red tints. To the N. [illegible] we observed three distinct columns of smoke which the Indians averred to be caused by the Chilian deserters, and were very bitter against them, as they were supposed to have lost their way, and to be desirous of returning again to the toldos. In this place I found my compass would not act, owing, as I supposed, to having been disabled; but as it subsequently behaved properly, its temporary derangement must have been due to some local attraction. To the northward, as well as I could guess the bearings, ran a long range of hills, terminating in a peculiarly peaked mountain, below which the Indians pointed out the trees which fringed a river—according to their statements, a tributary of the Chupat. To the west

133 extended rolling plains, which appeared to stretch away into the distance, interrupting the chain of the Cordillera, as though there were a depression or break in the mountains, no hills of large size being visible on the horizon. Whilst 777 lying down smoking on this hill, I picked up several pieces of opal and cacholong combined, and as I was idly forming them into different patterns on the ground, and had arranged a circle resembling a miniature Indian grave, one of my companions observing what I was doing, grew very angry, and said, 'That will bring ill luck,' evidently believing that I was mentally compassing the death of some one by witchcraft. As I had no wish to be killed, by way of prevention of any imaginary spells, I quickly gathered up the specimens, many of which were afterwards lost in the ensuing journey. The Indian name for this place is Yaiken-Kaimak, signifying that it is the hill whence they espy the signal smoke denoting the approach of the Indians from the north.

702 We remained five days in this encampment, a general uneasiness prevailing, and arms being kept ready to hand. In addition to the usual hunting, under the orders of the cacique, we were engaged in performing exercises on horseback; this mounted drill being intended as a preparation in case we should find the northern Tehuelches at war with the 000 Araucanos or Manzaneros Indians. The plains to the westward abounded with guanaco, some thousands being enclosed in the circle at one time. One day that I had not accompanied the hunting party, I was strolling across the camp, having volunteered to occupy the post of the vidette on an adjacent hill, when I observed a guanaco, very tired, coming towards me; so, hiding behind a bush, I waited till he unsuspiciously approached, and then rushing out, balled him with a pair of ostrich bolas. As he was so close to me, his forelegs were perfectly tied up, and I had not much difficulty in despatching him with a blow on the head from another set of bolas. By this time I had attained a tolerable dexterity in the use of the bolas, and it was my invariable custom when not otherwise

large brown otter, with orange-coloured fur on the breast, 136
found in the Parana; but the Indians' account is curious as
bearing on the name of the lake—'Nahuel Huapi,' or Tigers'
Island. It is possible that the aguarra found in the valley of
the Rio Negro may also haunt these districts. They further
told me that stags had been seen on the banks of the river,
but none were heard of during our stay in the neighbourhood.
A few miles below the ford the belt of trees ceases, 133
and on the southern side there is a peculiar group of what
seem to be square-shaped rocks, which at a distance have
very much the appearance of a small town regularly built and
walled. This is called by the Indians 'Sengel,' and was the
scene of a great fight between the Tehuelches and Araucanos [172]
many years ago, relics of which in the shape of bones and
skulls still whiten the plain. After crossing the river, the 000
young men who had been sent back returned, bringing with
them three horses belonging to the Chilians and one man
of their party, who, incredible as it seems, had assisted the
Indians to dismount and disable his companions. The particulars
of the fate of the others were not divulged, though
a story was current that some of them had managed to reach
the Chupat. I asked no questions, but the blood-stained
knife of one of the young men told its own story. This day
all the Indians rode on in silence, the last two days' events
having roused all their bad passions. I rode alone, feeling
that there was danger in the air, and near our halting-place
joined Orkeke and two others at a fireside for the purpose of
cooking some ostrich eggs, which we were busily discussing
when a messenger came to say that Casimiro was waiting to
see me at a spot which he indicated. I mounted and rode
off accordingly, but had not gone far before the two bravos
who had been commissioned to do for the Chilians galloped
up, one from either side, one brandishing his sword and the
other swinging his bolas. I at once put spurs to my horse,
and my mantle flying back discovered two revolvers belted
round my waist underneath it. They checked their career

In the range of hills described as visible from Kaimak, 135
there is a mine or vein of iron ore, about a mile due west
from the brook, and marked by a large mass of white quartz.
This is used by the Indians in the manufacture of bolas, and
an excursion was made to it. We brought back numerous
pieces, some of which, now in my possession, have been
examined, and pronounced to be brown and magnetic iron
ore. The Indians also told me that some leagues to the east
of this spot a mass of iron, having, as well as could be [823]
gathered from their account, the shape of a bar-shot, lies in
the middle of a barren plain, and is regarded by them with
superstitious awe. Whether this be an aërolite, or has any
connection with the ore on the hill side, it was not in my
power to determine, for in the critical state of feeling then
prevalent a visit of inspection was impracticable.

On the 22nd of October we marched a few miles, always 146
following the line of hills, and in a northerly course. Ostrich
eggs still formed the main staple of food, and furnished a
diet sufficiently nutritious, but producing all the effects of a
course of 'Banting.' Fortunately this day two of us killed 252
fat pumas, some steaks off which broiled, by way of variety,
were an acceptable addition to the evening meal; but from
experience I should advise all travellers to boil their puma.
We encamped in a small gorge in the hills, directly under a 133
peculiarly pointed rock, which is called Yowlel, or Ship 823
Rock, from its resemblance to a ship under sail, and is
regarded with superstition by the Indians, who believe that
all who endeavour to ascend it in the calmest weather will,
on arriving at the summit, have their mantles blown to pieces
by furious gusts of wind.

The next day—a glorious morning, after a night's rain— 526
we proceeded in the same direction; and while waiting for
the heavy baggage, in the shape of the women and children,
several of us repaired to a regular racecourse—a beaten track
six feet wide, extending for almost three miles, level and free
from stones, though rather sandy. Here we had trials of the

526 speed of our horses to while away the interval; and when
the women appeared, proceeded to the chase, over a pampa
formed by a bend in the range of hills. During the hunt
136 we found the carcase of a guanaco, which had been killed by
a puma, carefully covered up in grass and scrub. It was a
fat animal, such as the puma always singles out, although I
have read in some accounts that he follows the herds and
picks up the weakly ones. That this is not the case was
proved on various occasions, by finding the carcases left by
these cats, which were always those of animals in good condition.
133 Early in the afternoon we arrived at the encampment,
by the side of a small river, flowing in an easterly direction
from the hills. The women, with the exception of one or
two, were not present, and might be seen about two miles off,
[137] grubbing up a description of potato which grew in the neighbouring
hill side. The day was warm, and Orkeke invited
me to go to the top of one of the hills to see if any smoke or
signs of Indians were visible. We accordingly crossed the
stream, and while riding along the northern bank I observed
fish swimming lazily on the top of the water. After crossing
a marshy patch of ground, we ascended the hills, and dismounting
near a bank of blue earth, climbed on foot to the
summit, which was composed of a description of quartz, with
crystalline veins running through it. Scrambling up this
formation, we arrived at the top, whence we had a beautiful
view of the encampment and the green pasture bordering the
stream. To the northward the view was rather shut in by
hills rising to a considerable elevation. Just below us
lay a valley, in which several guanaco and ostriches were
taking their evening meal. We remained here for some
time smoking and enjoying the face of nature generally, but
could discern no smoke or signs of Indians. Orkeke remarked
that the pasture had a fresher appearance lower down the
course of the stream, and proposed that we should inspect
it. We accordingly descended from our elevated position,
mounted, and proceeded to the valley below; in our descent

being lucky enough to kill a fat male ostrich, which was sit- 133
ting on a nest of twenty-four eggs. We investigated the grass,
which was of good quality; and after an *al fresco* meal, in
which we were joined by Tchang, returned to the toldos,
where the women had just arrived with a considerable supply
of potatoes. I again, on our way back, observed fish in the 136
stream, so, turning my horse adrift, proceeded to extract my
hooks and line from the baggage under the charge of Mrs.
Orkeke. After a little delay all was ready; a piece of meat
supplied the place of fly as bait; and dropping it gently into
the pool, I soon had a bite, and pulled out a fish about two
pounds weight, of the perch class, similar to that called
dorado in the River Plate. After half an hour's fishing I
landed several others as large, and as it was nearly dark,
returned to supper off fried fish and boiled potatoes.

I had no opportunity of seeing the plants which produced 137
these tubers, but they exactly resembled those I afterwards
obtained in the northern country from a plant, the feathery
fern-like leaf of which springs from a long slender stem.
The following day we shifted camp down river, to the neigh- 000
bourhood of the green pasture, and found large quantities of
the eggs of the upland geese, ducks, &c. In the neigh-
bourhood one lonely tree grew by the side of the stream,
although the banks were lined with driftwood, probably car-
ried down by the wooded slopes of the Cordillera, ten miles
farther west, during floods. This day, smoke having been dis-
tinctly seen to the northward, Hummums was despatched to
ascertain whether it were a signal from the much-looked-for
Northern Indians. Three days subsequently, about nine in 619
the evening, whilst I was lying dreaming of home, and had
just—in dreamland—taken a glass of sherry, Orkeke woke
me up with the intelligence that fires were to be seen to the
north, which were no doubt caused by the 'chasqui' or mes-
senger previously despatched. In about three hours' time
—somewhere about midnight—Casimiro, Hummums, and
another Indian rode into the camp, and our toldo was soon

577 prepared me to meet Hinchel with feelings of friendliness towards a chief who had evinced so keen a sense of the care to be taken of a stranger who had confided himself to Indian hospitality; and the impression of this chief's character then formed, was fully confirmed on further acquaintance with him.

133 The two following days our route lay through a succession of rather barren valleys, bordered by ranges of high hills, everywhere strewn with rocks and boulders, and having a very gaunt and weird appearance. The valleys generally contained good pasture on either the northern or southern side of the streams which flowed down every one; but away from the vicinity of the water the soil was sandy, with low bushes scattered here and there.

On November 2, about two P.M., we arrived at a pass or gorge above the rendezvous at Henno. The view of the valley below was very refreshing; green grassy plains stretched for some miles, with a beautiful silvery stream running down the centre. But, much to our disappointment, no signs of Indians were visible; so we descended, and after bathing in a pool, and waiting until the toldos were pitched, lighted a big signal fire, which was shortly answered to the westward, and a messenger was immediately despatched who returned towards nightfall with the intelligence that the expected people would arrive next day; and we had to reconcile ourselves to another night of anxiety, being not at all certain as to the reception to be expected from the new comers.

England, &c., and he proceeded to interrogate me accordingly. 648 I found him to be a most intelligent Indian, speaking Spanish, Pampa, and Tehuelche fluently; and our acquaintance thus commenced ripened into a strong mutual friendship. My answers proving quite satisfactory, he was evidently much pleased, and ordered his wife to produce coffee, a little of which he had still remaining from his store procured at Chupat. While discussing this luxury, we had a long conversation on various topics, and he produced a photograph of Mr. Jones and some letters, one being an order for a ration of animals, mares and cattle, from the Argentine Government. He stated that he had not visited Patagones for some years, on account of a fight that had taken place, but would perhaps now accompany our party. Whilst conversing, his son, a boy of some twelve years of age, came in and startled me by his unlikeness to the other Indian boys, for his brown hair and eyes and fair complexion might easily have caused one to take him for an English boy. His mother was not present, as, for domestic reasons, Jackechan had parted with her; but I subsequently saw her, and she, although a handsome woman, had no European traits about her except that of having quarrelled with her husband. The following day was spent in a second parlemento—or, as the Indians call it, 'aix'—and all agreed to place themselves under the orders of Casimiro, for the purpose of protecting Patagones in the possible event of an invasion by the Indians of Rouke, or 'Calficura,' from the country north of Rio Negro. All present saw the importance of protecting Patagones, as, if that town should be destroyed, there would be no market for their furs, &c.

Our encampment was situated in a large grassy valley 133 watered by a stream flowing to the eastward, which was finally lost in a large marsh. The valley, which may have been about twelve miles in length and perhaps four in width at its broadest part, was confined by hills which, closing, narrowed it in at the eastern and western extremities. To

133 the N.W. and N. the hills—which almost merited the name of mountains—were peculiarly rugged, more especially towards their summits. About N.N.E. by compass from our camp, there was a pass formed by a dip or break in the range leading north, and through the mouth of the pass we could see the smoke of the hunting parties of the Araucanian [151] Indians, who were, however, many leagues distant. Throughout Patagonia smoke is always visible at a great distance, and the practised eyes of the Indians can distinguish it from the clouds, when ordinary persons would be unable to discern it unless pointed out to them. On the southern and eastern sides of the valley lay a range of hills, the rugged summits of which rose from lower slopes of more regular swell, and presenting more even and down-like surfaces than those on the western and northern sides. Immediately above our encampment the hill of Henno, from which the valley is named, rose from the plain. Near the summit of this hill Orkeke and myself, who for amusement had ridden up to it, one day came across the bleached skeleton of a man, perhaps one of two young Argentines who, as I was subsequently informed, had travelled thus far in company with the Indians, and had been for some—or no—reason killed by them near this spot. In the surrounding hills red porphyry frequently cropped out, and also veins of a red agate, unlike the flint agate so common in all the plains of Patagonia. The rocks near the summit of the hills were generally of igneous formation, and on the slopes of these hills frequent springs gushed out, easily discoverable from a distance by the vivid 361 green of the grass growing round them. As we gazed down from the height of Henno, the valley lay before us like a picture; our few toldos were situated in a group to the east, on the south side of the stream; about a quarter of a mile to the north the thirty or forty toldos of the Northern Indians were pitched, and opposite to them, on the north side of the stream, those of the party commanded by Jackechan 517 or Juan. The scene was animated but peaceful: here might

as to what there could possibly be in that place to write 203 about, as although the Tehuelche mind can comprehend writing letters to friends or officials, it by no means understands keeping a journal; and 'some untutored Indian' might probably, if suspicious that 'i'faith he'll prent it,' instead of waiting to cut up the book, anticipate all reviewers by cutting up the intended author himself.

On the 18th of November the camp at Henno was broken 133 up, and all marched a few leagues to the west, crossing successive rocky ridges running parallel to the Cordillera, and divided by well-watered valleys, and encamped near a valley watered by the same river, which between this place and Henno makes a considerable bend. This station was named 137 'Chiriq,' from a description of bush, with a leaf somewhat resembling that of the sloe, which grows abundantly on the banks of the stream. The wood of this shrub is soft and of little value, but burns well when dry. At this time neither flower nor fruit was visible, but it was described to me as bearing a berry resembling the currant. Since our departure from the wooded river Sengel, a description of cactus, or, as the Spaniards call it, tuna, bearing a tasteless fruit something like the ordinary prickly pear, had been met with occasionally, and found very troublesome, for as it grows close to the ground its spines are very apt to lame the horses if not carefully avoided in the chase. From Chiriq a large plain 133 appeared to extend for some leagues to the westward, bounded north and south by a wooded range of hills, and extending apparently to the bases of the lofty snow-covered peaks of the Cordillera, which appeared to form a complete barrier.

During our stay here an incident occurred which led to 53 the collection and comparison of the traditions concerning the hidden or enchanted city which still are current and believed among the Indians and Chilotes.

One day while hunting we were startled by a loud report, as of the discharge of a cannon, and looking to the west saw a black cloud of smoke hanging above the peaks of the Cor-

136 prise and kill the sitting bird, which he carefully hides, and
then proceed to eat the eggs with great gusto. We not
unfrequently found the eggs broken and scattered by these
animals, whilst the bird was generally discovered hard by.
The foxes, I think, content themselves with sucking the
eggs; but I was assured that near Geylum, where wild cats
are common, these latter will kill the bird on the nest, like
their relatives the puma. Besides these there are the con-
dors, eagles, and hawks, which no doubt commit extensive
ravages on the young broods. With all these difficulties to
contend with, the Rhea Darwinii exists in great numbers,
and if not kept down to a certain extent by the Indians and
229 other enemies would overrun the whole country. We were,
while at Chiriq, busily engaged in the destruction of both
guanaco and ostrich, the high rugged range of hills that
bounded Chiriq on the eastern side literally swarming with
guanaco; and as the females, heavy with young, could not
keep up their speed for a long distance, one man not unfre-
quently captured and killed five and six, or even eight;
extracting the young and taking its skin for mantles and the
carcase for food, while the hide of the mother served, if
needed, to repair the toldo. The marrow bones also were
taken as a dainty, but the meat was left for the condors,
puma, and foxes. We hunted almost every day, and traversed
● 133 nearly all the surrounding country. The plains lying to the
west afforded beautiful ground to ride over, covered with
soft grass, but a few leagues from the Cordillera a sudden
dip occurs, which forms a huge basin, lying about fifty feet
below the level of the plain, like the bed of a lake, and
extending to the mountains; the surface of this was chiefly
covered with grass, but in some parts the yellow clay and
beds of stone were visible. On the higher ground, before
reaching this basin, numerous lagoons occurred, round one
of which there was a large gull-rookery, and the inhabitants
made themselves audible at a long distance. Here also I
136 noticed many of the tero-tero, a spur-winged lapwing, com-

which we dried ourselves and cooked our dinner. A more romantic-looking spot than this I was never in. On the other side of the stream was a mass of grey rocks, half hid by shrubs, from amongst which here and there a dead tree stood up. On one side the grass was beautifully green, and the trees were growing in scattered round clumps, a few yards apart; doves were cooing in their branches, and young ostriches were running about. These, I am sorry to say, were caught by the horsemen, who jumped down and secured them: hunger had no scruples, and two furnished a good meal for each wet and starving traveller. Despite our ducking, we were soon all in high spirits, and some of us, before going back to the toldos, proceeded to search for wild potatoes, a few of which we brought back. The following 133
morning the sun rose bright, with a clear sky, so we con- 341
tinued our march in a westerly direction, arriving about midday at a gorge amongst the wooded hills, where I hoped that we were going to encamp; the women, however, diverged to the northward, and proceeded up a ravine or cañon in the barranca of the high pampa, pitched the toldos in a gloomy prison-like spot. Melancholy as it seemed to me, it afforded abundant pasture for the horses, which between the hills was scarce, so that they were inclined to wander into the woods and be hard to find when wanted, which undoubtedly was the reason of our taking the cañon in preference to the wooded valley. This cañon, a little beyond 133
our camp, divided into two, in one of which was a laguna frequented by avocets. The stream, which in spring poured down the glen, presented only an occasional pool and a dry bed, in which were numbers of rounded white stones of chalky substance, supplying capital materials for bolas, easily reduced to the suitable form: it also occurred to me that the chips pounded to powder might have the curative effects of chalk mixture, as diarrhoea had affected some of the party, and the result of the medicinal experiment was satisfactory, though it was impossible to prevail on the Indians to try the

133 remedy. Whilst the women were pitching toldos, the men,
eight in number, started to hunt again. Riding to the west,
where the plain was still open, we came upon another of the
huge basins previously described, on the western side of
which, beyond a lagoon stocked with waterfowl, flowed a
broad winding stream fringed with trees. At a short dis-
133 tance from the other side of the stream open glades extended
137 for the space of perhaps a mile to the verge of the inter-
minable forests, rising high up on the lofty sides of moun-
tains, some of whose summits were still partially snow-clad.
To the south were two or three round detached hummocks,
hardly deserving the name of hills, crowned with trees. In
the foreground were immense herds of guanaco, and on the
northern side frowned a high range of arid-looking hills,
forming a great contrast to the deliciously-refreshing green
aspect of the other points of view. Whilst waiting concealed
behind a bush for the coming herd, which had been cun-
ningly encircled by Tchang and another Indian, and were to
be driven in our direction, we gazed long at the beautiful
view before us, and Orkeke pointed out a mountain some dis-
tance to the north, underneath which, he said, was the
entrance to the scene of our future campaign against the
wild cattle. Towards evening we returned to the toldos,
pretty well loaded with skins. On another occasion, when
hunting, we made a circle, finishing off in the wooded dis-
trict near the banks of the river. On our return we hunted
over a park-like country, with alternate open glades and
woods. Here we killed a doe red deer and a large descrip-
[136] tion of fox, apparently identical with the Falkland Island
species (Lupus antarcticus). In the vicinity of the woods, the
velvety sward was carpeted with the wild strawberry plants,
which, however, were only in bloom. On this occasion our
enjoyment was marred by one of the party getting a severe
fall, which laid him up for a day or two. Before we reached
the toldos rain set in heavily, which during the night turned
to snow, and the morning sun shone on a white landscape.

During our stay the women went to the woods to cut fresh 313
poles for the toldos, and the men brought back from the 137
wooded country a description of fungus, which, when dried, 372
forms an excellent tinder, of considerable value amongst the Indians, as there are only a few spots where it is to be obtained. After some days spent in this pleasant neighbourhood, as the supply of guanaco was failing, we marched over the barren range of hills, and passing a lagoon of considerable extent below the hills, encamped on the other side of them, by the side of a smaller one, in a place called 'Gogomenykaik.'

During the hunt I had singled out a guanaco, and was in 133
full chase across the upper pampa, which was covered with stunted bushes and tufts of grass, when the quarry suddenly disappeared, as if the earth had swallowed him. The next moment my horse halted in mid-gallop, with its fore feet on the edge of a precipitous descent which shelved away without any warning. Below was a long beautiful glen, with a pool of water glistening among the trees which filled it, but did not rear their topmost boughs above the level of the pampa. Here the guanaco had taken refuge, and as the descent was impracticable for a horse, I could only gaze longingly down into the fairy-like scene, and turn away to join the circle, remembering that it was only too easy to lose oneself by delay. Of this an instance occurred the same day, for one of the Chilians did not appear at the fireside when the hunting was completed. At first no heed was bestowed on him, as it was natural to suppose that he had chased a herd of guanaco to some distance, and was detained taking off the skins; but when at sunset he was still missing, some dry grass was fired, for the purpose of directing him to our camp. The following morning he had not appeared when we started to hunt, myself going as pointsman with Orkeke. We galloped for some distance over the plain, and halted in a
hollow, where we came on six young skunks outside their [136]
parental burrow, into which they quickly vanished on our

133 dismounting; but as their burrows do not penetrate far, Orkeke soon grubbed out a couple. As they were too small to kill for the value of their skins, and too much trouble to carry home as pets for the children, we set them free again, and I proceeded, leaving Orkeke to pursue his way slowly. A slight rise brought me in front of a rocky hill, on the other side of which was a river with wooded banks, across the valley of which river lay my route. I at first considered it to be the same as that seen in the previous encampment, but on reflection it was plainly another, this flowing north-east, whilst the other took a south-west course. Our hunt progressed very fairly. On closing the circle, one of the Chilians, who was running a guanaco with me, and not expert in the use of the bolas, entangled his horse and himself instead of the chase, which lost him his spoils, and caused much merriment amongst the remainder of the party; although I may as well state here that when a horse gets a ball round his legs or under his tail, it is not much of a joking matter for the rider. On our way back to camp, halting by a
[137] spring, we found large quantities of wild celery; nettles were also common—the real old English white-flowering one being prevalent. Although my bare legs got considerably stung, I forgot to swear in Tehuelche, and forgave the plant for old acquaintance sake. At the toldos we found the Chilian, who had arrived recently, having run a herd some distance and lost his way, but had been safely directed by our signal
231 fires. In the afternoon some of the party were occupied in breaking their horses, while others were sitting at home lazily watching the performance. Conde's step-father, generally known as 'Paliki,' had a three-year-old iron-grey, with a white star, and a very fine animal, tied up ready to be mounted for the first time. Paliki entered our toldo to borrow my cincta, or girth, and chaffed me, asking if I would venture to 'domar' him. Orkeke seconded the proposal, and accordingly, having stripped off mantle and boots, I proceeded to take the lazo and reins and mount. The in-

000 peruse my library, namely, half of the delightful 'Elsie
Venner,' which Crimè had picked up on board some ship to
serve as wadding for his guns, and sold to me for a little
487 powder. To enable the reader to follow our somewhat
devious course and the intricacies of these hills and frequent
rivers, the sketch map at page 164 will be found useful; it
does not pretend to be exact, but gives a very fair idea of
the line of country traversed, and of our migrations between
Henno and Teckel.

133 On the 23rd, Indians having been seen to the north and
137 guanaco hunting proving a failure, Orkeke, to my great
224 delight, proposed a visit to the wild-cattle country. The
camp was accordingly struck, and following more or less the
valley of the river, which flowed after one turn nearly due
east, we shortly came out into an open plain running up
between the mountains, at the head of which we encamped
by some tall beeches on the banks of the stream. The whole
of the latter part of the plain traversed was literally carpeted
with strawberry plants all in blossom, the soil being of a
dark peaty nature. Young ostriches were now numerous,
and every hunt some were captured, and formed a welcome
[857 addition to our dinner. The children had several alive as
231] pets, which they used to let loose and then catch with
miniature bolas, generally ending in killing them. Our programme
was to leave all the women, toldos, and other
encumbrances in this spot, named 'Weekel,' or Chaykash—
a regular station, and which Hinchel's party had occupied a
few weeks previously—and proceed ourselves into the interior
in search of cattle. The following morning at daylight
horses were caught and saddled, and, after receiving the
good wishes of the women, who adjured us to bring back
plenty of fat beef, we started off just as the sun was rising
behind the hills to the eastward. The air was most invigorating,
and we trotted along for some distance up a
slightly irregular and sandy slope, halting after an hour or
two by the side of a deliciously clear brook, flowing east,

where we smoked. We had previously passed guanaco and 133 ostrich, but no notice was taken of them, the Indians having 136 larger game in view. After passing this brook, the head- 224 water of the river near which we had left the toldos, we skirted a large basin-like plain of beautiful green pasture, and after galloping for some time entered the forest, travelling along a path which only permitted us to proceed in Indian-file. The trees were in many places dead, not blackened by fire, but standing up like ghostly bleached and bare skeletons. It is a remarkable fact that all the forests on the eastern side are skirted by a belt of dead trees. At length, however, just as we came in sight of a curiously pointed rock which in the distance resembled the spire of a church, we entered the forest of live trees; the undergrowth was composed of currant, bay, and other bushes, whilst here and there were beds of yellow violets, and the inevitable strawberry plants everywhere. After crossing a stream, which, flowing from the north, afterwards took a westerly course, thus proving that we had passed the watershed, we proceeded, under cover of a huge rock, to reconnoitre the hunting ground. The scenery was beautiful: a valley, about a mile wide, stretched directly under us; on the southern verge a silver line marked the easterly river, and another on the northern the one debouching in the Pacific; whilst above, on both sides, rose high mountains covered with vegetation and almost impenetrable forests. On the western side of the valley a solitary bull was leisurely taking his breakfast, and above our look-out rock a huge condor lazily flapped his wings. These were the only specimens of animal life in view. Pursuing our way in perfect silence, as from the first entrance into the forests speaking had been prohibited, we followed the leader along the narrow cattle path, passing here and there the remains of a dead bull or cow that had met their fate by the Indian's lazo, and at length descended to the plain. It was about midday, and the day was warm, so we halted, changed horses, looked to our girths, got lazos ready

133 136 224 for use, and then started on. As we were proceeding we observed two or three animals amongst the woods on the opposite side, but knowing that it would be useless to follow, pursued our course up the valley. Having crossed the western stream, we at once entered a thicket where the path was scarcely distinguishable from the cover, but our leader never faltered, and led the way through open glades alternating with thick woods, on every side of which were cattle marks, many being holes stamped out by the bulls, or wallowing places. The glades soon terminated in forests, which seemed to stretch unbroken on either side. We had expected before reaching this point to have found cattle in considerable numbers, but the warmth of the day had probably driven them into the thickets to seek shelter. We now commenced to ascend over a dangerous path, encumbered here and there with loose boulders and entangled in dense thickets, whilst we could hear and catch occasional glimpses of the river foaming down a ravine on our left, and presently arrived at the top of a ridge where the forests became more uniformly dense, and we could with great difficulty pursue our way. It was a mystery to me how Orkeke, who acted as guide, knew where we were, as on one occasion the slightly-marked paths diverged in different directions, and on another we literally found ourselves amongst fallen trees in a forest so dense that the light of day scarcely penetrated its shades. Our leader, however, never hesitated, but led us onwards in all confidence. Whilst brushing along, if I may be allowed the term, trying to keep the leader in sight, I heard something tapping on a tree, and looking up, saw close above [136] me a most beautifully marked red-crested woodpecker. We at length commenced to descend, and, after passing many channels of rivulets issuing from springs, where a slip of the horse's foot on the wet and mossy stones would have occasioned something worse than broken bones, as they were situated on the edge of a deep ravine, finally emerged from the woods and found ourselves on a hill of some three hundred

feet in height, whence we looked down on a broad plain 133 136 224 in the form of a triangle, bounded by the river flowing through the ravine on the north side, and on the southern by another coming from the south, which two streams united in one large river at the western apex, at a distance of about perhaps a league. Above and around, on all sides excepting to the west and the ravines through which the rivers flowed, rose the unbroken wall of the lofty mountains of the Cordillera, many of their peaks snow-clad. No sound was to be heard except the rushing of the river in the ravine, and no animal life to be seen except a condor or two floating high above us in the clear sky. The scene was sublime, and I viewed it in silence for some minutes, till the pipe, being handed to me, dispelled all nascent poetic tendencies. The Indians remained silent and looked disgusted, as a herd of cattle had been expected to be viewed on the plain below. We descended to the flats, and crossed the river, on the banks of which 'Paja' or Pampa-grass grew in abundance, as well as the bamboo-like canes from which Araucanian Indians make their lance shafts, and a plant called by the Chilians 'Talka,' the stalk of which, resembling rhubarb, is refreshing and juicy. On the northern edges and slope of the ravine behind us towered graceful pines sixty feet high, which, though an impassable barrier of rock prevented close inspection, appeared to be a species of Araucaria; the bark was imbricated and the stems rose bare of branches for two-thirds of their height, like those figured by M. Gay. Many had been carried down by landslips, and lay tossed and entangled on the sides of the ravine. The increase of temperature after [[32] passing the watershed was sensibly great, amounting to from seven to ten degrees, and the vegetation far more luxuriant, the plants presenting many new forms unknown at the eastern side. After leaving the plain and crossing the 133 137 224 shallow stream, we left our mantles, and girthed up near a tree in a thicket festooned with a beautiful creeper, having a bell-shaped flower of violet radiated with brown. The

● 133 variety of flowers made an Eden of this lovely spot: climbing 137 clusters of sweet-peas, vetches, and rich golden flowers re- 224 sembling gorgeous marigolds, and many another blossom, filled the air with perfume and delighted the eye with their beauty. Proceeding still westward we entered a valley with alternate clumps of trees and green pastures, and after riding about a mile I espied from a ridge on one side of the valley two bulls on the other side, just clear of the thick 224 woods bordering the ascent of the mountains. The word was passed in whispers to the cacique, and a halt being called under cover of some bushes, a plan of attack was arranged in the following manner. Two men were sent round to endeavour to drive the animals to a clearing where it would be possible to use the lazo, the remainder of the party proceeding down towards the open ground with lazos, ready to chase if the bulls should come that way. For a few minutes we remained stationary, picking the strawberries, which in this spot were ripe, although the plants previously met with were only in flower. At the end of five minutes spent in anxiously hoping that our plan would prove successful, a yell from the other side put us on the alert, and we had the gratification to see one of the animals coming straight towards our cover. Alas! just as we were preparing to dash out, he turned on the edge of the plain, and after charging furiously at his pursuers dashed into a thicket, where he stood at bay. We immediately closed round him, and dismounting, I advanced on foot to try and bring him down with the revolver; just as I had got within half a dozen paces of him, and behind a bush was quietly taking aim at his shoulder, the Indians, eager for beef, and safe on their horses at a considerable distance off, shouted, 'Nearer! nearer!' I accordingly stepped from my cover, but had hardly moved a pace forward when my spur caught in a root: at the same moment 'El Toro' charged. Entangled with the root, I could not jump on one side as he came on; so when within a yard I fired a shot in his face, hoping to

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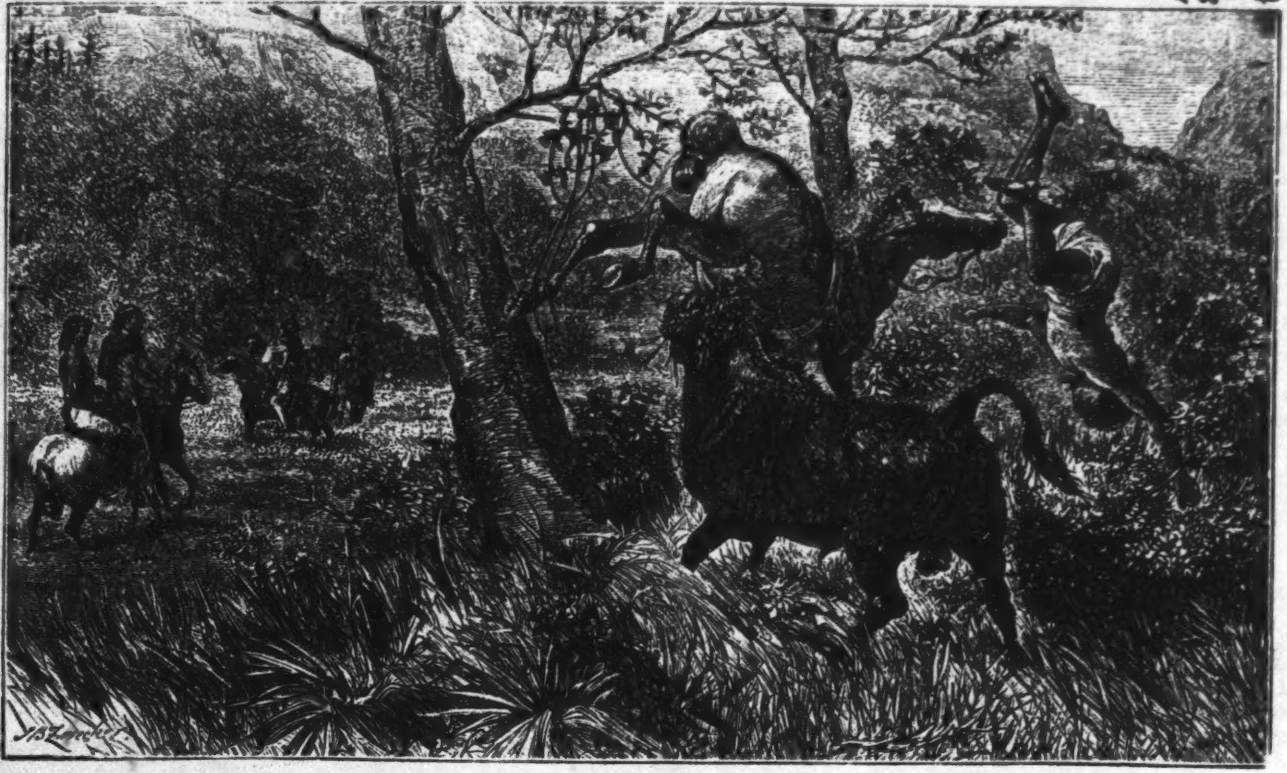
[facing P.159]



A WILD BULL IN THE CORDILLERA.

361 adjourned to the toldos, situated on the bend of the river near a ford or pass. We had now arrived at the camp agreed on as a general rendezvous at Henno, previous to the dispersion of the Indians. This valley is called Teckel, and is a favourite 361 resting-place after the young guanaco season, both for the 133 purpose of refreshing the horses and manufacturing the young guanaco skins into mantles, previous to proceeding to trade either at the Rio Negro or with the Indians of Las Manzanas. The encampment is usually situated on the ground occupied at this time, viz., on the west side of the river, about a mile from a large barren hill which shuts out the view of the Cordillera. On the east side the valley extends some three miles, and continues open to the north for perhaps six miles. It is all fertile, but the best grazing ground is at the north-east end. The banks of the river, which are destitute of trees, are in many places high, and formed under the surface earth of various stratified clays—blue, white, and red. In the bottom of the stream, which is singularly free from stones, thick beds of clay are of frequent occurrence, almost approaching to the tufa found in the Parana and other confluents of La Plata, and in some spots there are beds of black sand, probably auriferous; fish are procurable in any [136] eddy or pool, and crayfish abound and form the most tempting bait for the others. Out of some of the finest clay I was enabled to manufacture a pipe by the simple process of shaping it in the hand and then baking it in the ashes, but 000 it did not last long. Shortly after our arrival one of the small children, whilst playing with bolas formed out of the foot and sinews of an ostrich, hurt himself, and in consequence a slaughter of mares took place, which opportunely enabled us to dispense with hunting and rest our horses, which by this time stood in sore need of some bye days, though, as there was a good racecourse, we frequently indulged in a race just to keep the horses in exercise. After we had been about a week settled here, the women being all hard at work making up mantles—which will be described in

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

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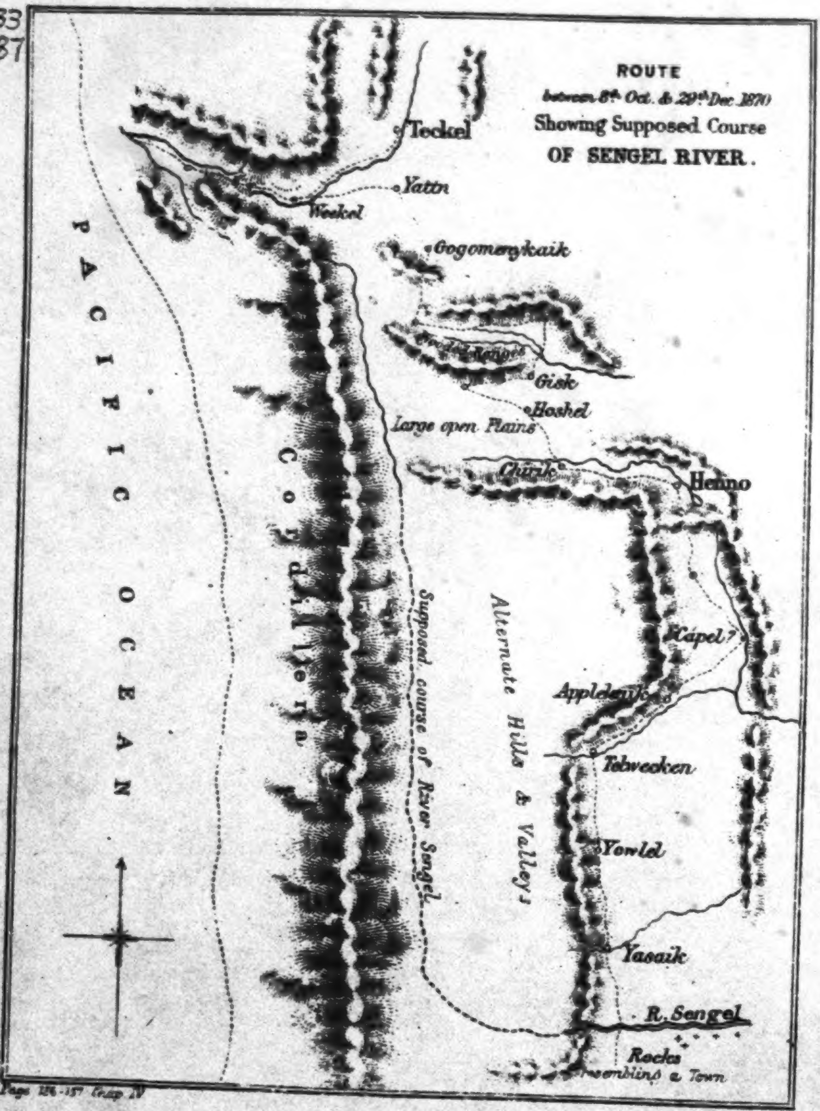
ROUTE
between 8th Oct. & 29th Dec 1870
Showing Supposed Course
OF SENGEL RIVER.
Teckel
Yattn
Weekel
Gogomengkaik
Ranges
Gisk
Hoshel
Large open Plains
Chirik
Henno
Kapel
Appleaik
Tehweeken
Yowlel
Yasaik
R. Sengel
Rocks
resembling a Town
PACIFIC OCEAN
Cordillera
Supposed course of River Sengel
Alternate Hills & Valleys

Page 156-157 Chap IV

[facing p. 164]

592 position as secretary and general referee next in rank to the cacique, scarcely reconciled me to the exchange of the orderly comfort of Mrs. Orkeke's household for the dignified discomfort of my present quarters. They were also shared by Meña, whose good qualities had raised him above his fellow-Chilians. Their number had been reduced to four, Arica having disappeared whilst hunting near Teckel: without doubt his quarrelsome disposition had occasioned his death at the hands of some one whom he had insulted or offended.
● 133 The route followed led northwards through a valley on both sides of which we hunted, and arrived in the afternoon at an encampment called Carge-kaik, or Four Hills. There was nothing remarkable in the scenery: the hill-sides on either hand were covered with scrub, and the summits presented masses of rocks, and in some places loose boulders, amongst which numerous armadilloes were basking in the sun. They
136 are easily captured, as they are very slow; but if they once get into their burrow it is difficult to extract them, owing to the tenacity with which they hold fast to the soil. They are
252 very good eating, and are usually cooked in the shell on the fire, the entrails, &c., being taken out, and the cavity filled with heated stones. When they are in their best condition, one leg is sufficient for a man, as there is about an inch of
281 yellow fat on them. Of the shells the women make work-
415 baskets, to contain their bodkins, sinews, &c., when sewing, or to serve as colour-boxes for the different colours when painting.

852 The day following our arrival, Tankelow and another Indian were despatched as messengers to the party of Araucanian Indians, or Manzaneros, supposed to be encamped a few marches distant. During that night a child was born, the parents of which were rich, and accordingly a great slaughter of mares took place, the mandil tent was erected, and a feast and dance announced.

648 Meanwhile, about four P.M., the chasquis returned, bring-
576 ing with them an Araucanian Indian, who was escorted to

000 whole cavalcade of women and children were in motion, and the circle formed for the hunt.

133 Several shallow streams, fringed with dwarf beeches, were crossed, flowing into lagoons or into the Teckel River, the course of which lay north-east of our line, and the cavalcade of women struck the valley occasionally in the march. Of the hills dividing these streams, the southern side consisted of gradual slopes covered with coarse grass, while the northern counterslopes were precipitous, and covered with loose rocks and stones. Orkeke, in the previous marches, had often informed me that the Araucanos' country was very stony, and that there were a great many armadilloes, but little other game; and this day guanaco were rarely seen, but ostriches were numerous and armadillo abounded.

After crossing several ridges and glens, we at length traversed a hillocky plain, of the usual scrub-covered aspect, and strewn with flint, agate, and other pebbles, and encamped for the night in a place called 'Woolkein,' situated by the side of a water-course which was now nearly dry, the water only remaining in the deep holes. We had left the cañon or valley of the river Teckel a few miles east, from which point it appeared to give a sharp turn in an easterly direction.

To the west the mountains of the Cordillera were visible about twenty miles distant, while on the south were the rocky abrupt hills already passed over, and on the north a range of rather peaked hills running west, and appearing to slope at their western extremity towards the plains beneath the Cordillera. Next morning, before the rime was off the pasture, we were again *en route*, and after a rocky descent of perhaps fifty feet reached a second plain, everywhere strewn with stones, which rendered galloping very difficult; nevertheless a large herd of guanaco were enclosed, and numbers killed, while ostrich, on the contrary, appeared to be very
136 scarce. To my great surprise, whilst running some guanaco, two large partridges got up from close to my horse's feet,

and flying a short distance settled again. Partridges had T 136
been described to me in the neighbourhood of Santa Cruz,
but I had never seen one, and these were the first met with T
in the country. Towards three in the afternoon we emerged 133
from the stony district to a plain covered with sand and
scrub, and after refreshing ourselves at a rivulet, travelled
westward, with the Cordillera in full front, till we turned a
high cliff which jutted out from the grassy slopes in which
the hills fell gradually down to the plains, and beyond it,
turning again northward, entered a level plain, at the far
extremity of which we observed with great contentment the
answering smoke from the toldos of the Araucanian Indians.
On the south-west edge of this valley the high beetling cliff
obscured the view of the wooded mountains, which, however,
showed out between the hills shutting in the valley we had
traversed up to this point. On the eastern side rose a range
of hills, barren and desolate, with here and there a single
guanaco in solitary majesty, cropping the stunted grass. In T
front of us, directly to the north, lay a large lagoon, in which [136]
numerous swans and flamingoes were wading and swimming
about. Beyond it were visible the toldos of the Araucanians, A
ten in number. T

We halted near the head of the lagoon, under shelter of 648 some thick bushes, to collect our forces, don our best ponchos and silver ornaments, and change our horses, and then proceeded slowly to within about a quarter of a mile of the toldos. To our great surprise nobody appeared to receive us; but at length a woman arrived with the intelligence that all the men were away hunting, but had been sent for, and would arrive shortly.

Our women meanwhile erected the toldos on a green sward, carpeted with strawberry plants, near to a small stream which divided our camp from that of the Araucanos. All dismounted and rested after the long journey of fully forty miles from the previous station; and in about half an hour the Araucanos appeared, galloping like demons. Their

Manzanas, where the Indians anticipated finding plenty of 60- fruit and plenty of drink. After leaving Eagel, the character 135 of the country changed. We were no longer traversing pampas, with their dreary monotony, but journeyed through level valleys of two or three miles in extent, watered by rivulets fringed with stunted trees, and abounding with game. The general line of the dividing hills—which were round downs and occasionally broken and waterworn cliffs—was from east to west, seeming as if they were thrown off as spurs from the Cordillera, from which, however, their western bases were divided by a valley often narrowing to a glen, down which flowed a stream in a northward course. Towards evening a halt was made at the side of a stream where there was sufficient pasture for the horses, and it was an amusing sight to watch the long line of women winding down the hills in the distance, like a flock of ants; the Araucanians driving their cattle and mares separate from our party, and their sheep bringing up the rear by slow marches under charge of some lads.

Early the following morning the camp was struck, and after crossing a hill directly above the encampment, which was covered with rank high grass, we descended the northward slope to a wild, barren-looking plain, at the northern side of which, near to a low range of hills, some trees and a silver line marked the course of a river flowing from the Cordillera, the mountains of which rose to a height of 2,000 or 3,000 feet, wooded nearly to the summits, and their crest glittering with occasional patches of snow that had defied the power of the summer sun. Traversing this plain, which was dotted with barberry and other bushes, and varied here and there by small hummocky ridges, we closed the hunting circle by the banks of the stream, a few miles distant from the Cordillera. Here, in different parties, the usual fires were lit, and the hunting meal discussed, after which we proceeded to the toldos. The Araucanians had pitched theirs on the southern bank of the river, amongst some

T 133 clumps of trees; whilst those of the Tehuelches were situated on the northern bank, the river dividing the two villages. Westward from our encampment the barren plain was succeeded by a wide level of grass, reaching to the base of the mountains, some two miles distant; but higher up the course of the river, which trended to the north, the plain appeared to resume its barren and stony aspect, with here and there a dry lagoon, until the slope of the mountains was reached, and detached belts of trees formed the commencement of the forest. On the southern side of the river the pasture was not very abundant; nevertheless there was sufficient for the horses, cattle, and sheep of our allies to graze upon.

A 527 After the usual stable drill most of us bathed in the stream, which, although nowhere of great depth, had pools at intervals suited for bathing; but the water was icy cold. The day following our arrival at this camp, which was named Diplaik, a birthday feast took place in the Araucanian toldos, to which most of us were invited, the usual tent being erected and a dance held in the evening, and the feast and dance were kept up for two days and nights, at the end of which a messenger arrived from Foyel to say that Calficura, the chief of the Indians encamped at the Salinas north of the Rio Negro, near Bahia Blanca, was going to make war on Buenos Ayres, the reason assigned being the murder of one of his relations by the Christians; he therefore desired the Araucanians and Tehuelches to join with him in the inroad. His literal message was as follows: 'My horse is ready, my foot is in the stirrup, my lance is in my hand, and I go to make war against these Christians, who tire me out with their falseness.' A T 648

A parlemento was called, and the chiefs deliberated for some time, but in the end determined to have nothing to do with the affair; so a message was sent to the effect that he might do as he pleased, but that they wished to maintain peace.

T
262 Tehuelches would before this touch the fish caught by me,
226 and even expressed great disgust at the idea, is worthy of
177 note, as it has been stated that on the coast they catch and eat sea fish, which could only be alleged by persons ignorant of their real habits of life.*

T
● 133 On the 12th we marched; the cause of our detention for the two extra days being the continued sickness of Crimè, who, however, at length determined to make an effort and proceed, although barely able to sit on his horse. The women followed, more or less, the valley of the river, whilst the hunters ranged over the hills, which on the western side were in most parts free from rock and stones and abounded
T
with ostriches. During the journey I came suddenly on two
[134] wild cats, one of which my dog attacked and killed, and the other fell a victim to my bolas. These were of the species common in the provinces of La Plata, and especially in the islands of the Parana. Towards evening we came on another small stream flowing into the main river, into the plain of which we subsequently descended and found the toldos
A already pitched, literally 'sub tegmine fagi.' During this
606 day's ride, happening to be in the same part of the circle as the Araucanians, we cooked our dinners in company and rode home together. On the way Quintuhual's eldest son, with whom I had always had very friendly relations, said that he desired to recognise me as his brother. So we accordingly joined hands, and riding together formally declared that we were as brothers, and would always remember the duties of our relationship and assist each other, if needs be, in whatever part of the world we might be placed. All this was very satisfactory, and it may be interesting to the reader to know that my sisters and cousins were the good-looking girls who had asked such curious questions at Esgel, and with whom, though we could not understand each other's language, I had always kept up a laughing acquaintance, thereby arousing considerable jealousy in the bosoms of my

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* Cf. Guinnard, 'Three Years' Slavery,' p. 73.

Tehuelche friends

On the 18th of February we left Lilly-haik, and bid 133
adieu to the pleasant river and the sylvan delights of this Paradise, as it seemed to us, with its flowery shades. As we ascended the northern declivity of the high ground bounding the valley, I halted to take a farewell look; and nowhere has a more beautiful scene presented itself to my gaze. The valley narrowed as it curved to the west, and at its head, through a gigantic cleft, the perpendicular walls of which rose several hundred feet, the waters of the river issued from their mountain cradle. So deep was the gloom of this gorge, that it was impenetrable to even Indian eyes, and the river seemed to flow into the sunlight out of unknown darkness. Above, on either hand, the precipitous cliffs sloped upwards into high mountains clothed with a rich mantle of the dark green, cedar-like foliage of the beech forests; and between [37]
their summits might be discerned the dazzling peaks of far-distant loftier mountains crowned with perpetual snow.

Turning our backs upon this lovely scene, we crossed a remarkable succession of barren and stony terraces or benches of curiously irregular formation, the terraces running in different directions, and presenting no parallel lines to indicate any uniform action of water; the irregular slopes and level surfaces resembling a complication of gigantic steps. We at length descended to a plain bordering a river, which all the Indians agreed in declaring to be the main branch of the Chupat. The banks on the southern side were remarkable for being fringed with a species of pampas grass, while on the northern side grew a few trees, near which the toldos were pitched.

The river was about forty yards in width, and easily fordable in most places, although there were deep reaches where a horse had to swim. The foremost party of the hunters crossed first, and some, either not knowing or careless of the fords, enjoyed a bathe, swimming alongside their horses. By eventide all our party, women and baggage, had arrived. A few days' halt was occasioned in this place, 133 named Chupatruah, by the continued illness of the cacique Crimè. We hunted in all the surrounding country, which presented no very remarkable features. Down river, or to speak more correctly to the eastward, after passing a range of hills of the usual description, covered with short tufty grass, interspersed with shrubs, through which the river forces its way in a succession of narrow gorges, a large plain opened out, which extended for perhaps nine miles on each side, scantily covered with grass, excepting towards the banks of the river, where the pasture was luxuriant.

A subsequent comparison of the observations made by Welsh settlers as to its lower course with my own, aided by Indian accounts, enables me to state that the Chupat river is characterised throughout its course by the narrow gorge-like cuttings alternating with similar wide plains, all of which are suitable for cultivation. Besides the Sengel, which is doubtless one of its main feeders, other streams occurring in our journey had also been described as tributaries of the Chupat, and by their direction of course it would appear that their waters, if they reach the sea, must flow into this river; but it seems to me difficult to understand how, if the Chupat receives the drainage of so large an area of country, its stream near the mouth, as described both by Indians and settlers, can be of such small dimensions. It is, therefore, probable that some, if not most, of the lesser rivers lose themselves in lagoons or swamps in the central districts, and the reader must be pleased to remember that the courses of these rivers, as indicated on the map, are not in all cases laid down from my own observation, but partly from Indian description and partly from an already existing map, probably compiled from similar data.

To the westward plains occur at intervals apparently until the river debouches from the ravines of the high mountains of the Andes, about twelve miles from the encampment. At this point the stream flows from the northward, and the Indians informed me has its source in a large lake, most

probably Nahuel-huapi. The pasture in the immediate 133
vicinity of the camp was scanty, having apparently been recently burned, but the soil was of a rich alluvial description. In the chase the most remarkable thing observed was the 134
abundance of armadilloes, one hunter frequently bringing in two or three. Fish also were abundant in the river, and averaged a larger size than those previously caught.

On February 19th smoke was observed to the northward, not far distant, and towards evening a chasqui arrived, bringing with him a couple of bottles of liquor for Quintuhual, as well as news that things were going on well amongst Foyel's people; and on the 21st we again marched over a high plateau broken by numerous irregular ravines which appeared to have been swept by an inundation. High isolated cliffs stood up as though the waters had washed round them and swept away the intervening soil, leaving their water-worn faces marked with the indelible record of the floods, as plainly as the torn and blasted rocks in the southern districts bore the traces of volcanic fires. At last a more unbroken plain terminated suddenly in a shelving descent of 300 to 400 feet, the wall of a chasm covered with grass and shrubs interspersed with scattered boulders, down which we made our way, encamping near the base, where a beautiful spring gushed from the side. The bottom of the cañon, which was nearly half a mile in width, contained a watercourse, the bed of which was dry at this season, except a few pools of stagnant water unsuitable for drinking.

It was intended to despatch messengers from this place, 202
which was called Cuchamen, to Foyel, and also Cheoeque, the chief of Las Manzanas, warning him of our near approach; and accordingly, after our arrival in camp, I wrote a letter to the said chieftain at the dictation of Casimiro, which in well-rounded periods and with much complimentary verbiage explained the fact and reasons of our having united all the Indians and inviting their co-operation.

The following morning, after the letter had been read and

the hunting party, but overtook the people who had arrived 000
with the grog, returning with their remaining mantles, horses, colts, &c., and loudly abusing the Tehuelches for a set of thieving rascals. One of this party was a Valdivian boy who spoke fluent Spanish, and invited me to accompany him to Los Llanos, whither he now intended returning. He stated that in seven or eight days he hoped to reach his destination, and that from thence to the port of Valdivia was but a day and a half's journey. On arriving at the next encampment I bade adieu to these people, who continued their march farther to the north, not liking to trust their property again in the neighbourhood of our camp.

Only halting for the night, we resumed our journey shortly T 133
after daylight, mounting a rather steep ascent to a high plateau strewn with sharp stones and crossed by ridges of rocks at intervals.

Ostriches and guanaco were numerous, and although 000
chasing them almost involved the certainty of laming one's horse, many were killed. In this hunt a male guanaco came racing towards me from the Indians on the western side of the circle, and on my galloping to intercept him, he turned and descended a ridge of rocks. I was about to throw the bolas, being within distance, when he suddenly tripped, and, falling on his head, lay stunned at the bottom of the cliff, where I soon despatched him with my knife.

These barren pampas terminated suddenly in a line of cliffs, T 133
gradually but steeply shelving in some places, and in others presenting a perpendicular descent of 200 feet; at the base lay a large plain watered by a brook, and enclosed on the southern, eastern, and partially on the western sides by these cliffs, while the northern and north-western boundary was formed by hills rising in gentle slopes. In about the centre T A 648
of this plain, close to the brook side, were to be distinguished the toldos of Foyel, to which the women were wending their way, having descended by a ravine to the east, while some distance to the north-east on the upper plains were to be distin-

164 In this plain, called by the Indians Gatchen-
312 kaik or Rocky Hills, Crimè's illness caused us to remain en-
camped until March 21, during the greater part of which
time I and several others were suffering from neuralgia and
[265] ulcerations in the mouth, caused I think, by the bad water
we had to drink, perhaps also by the want of salt, which had
become a very scarce commodity.

758 Friendly rivalry was kept up between the tribes in play, hunting, and other sports, in which fortune varied from one side to the other. Every other day I visited poor Crimè, whose groans might be heard at night accompanied by the chant of some old hag. The sick man always asked me how long he would live. I at first tried to persuade him that he would get well, but after a time, as he was really fast sinking, gave him to understand that he might live a month if he was lucky. I offered to open his leg and endeavour to cure him, but this he would not allow, stating that if he died under the operation it would go hard with the doctor, which was indeed true, so I gave up my intentions of performing a surgical operation.

000 Before we broke up the camp, a Valdivian and other Indians arrived from Cheoeque's, but brought little news, stating that the Manzaneros were still dispersed amongst the valleys of the Cordillera engaged in gathering the yearly harvest of apples and piñones: of these we had already received plenty from Foyel's people, who kept up a constant communication with their relations near the Rio Limay.

133 On the 21st all left the valley and travelled a few leagues through a diversified country. On the line of march cliffs, which stood out in the glens in irregular, picturesque manner, were of yellow and red sandstone, but to the westward black basaltic heights could be seen abutting on the plains, while in hunting over the higher ground masses of ironstone and igneous rock were met with scattered over the surface. We remained for the night in a valley called Changi, and, proceeding next day, arrived about noon at a large plain shut in by sandstone cliffs on the eastern side, at the northern

side of which towered a peculiar pointed rock, perhaps 133 800 feet in height, standing out alone on the sloping descent; viewed from the western side, it appeared like a natural column composed of stratified yellow and red and black layers of sand, and on the summit a condor had his eyry.

The plain extended for several miles to the west, where it was again closed in by cliffs, differing from those to the eastward in being composed of basalt. In this plain, called Geylum, situated, according to Indian accounts, a few leagues to the eastward of Lake Nahuel-huapi, and distant sixty miles from the Rio Limay, and seventy-five miles from Las Manzanas, it was determined to spend the time required for sending chasquis to give notice of our near approach, prior to all marching in company for Cheoeque's head-quarters.

000 civilised appearance of those Indians. We passed several very hungry and disagreeable days in Geylum previous to starting; there was little game in the surrounding country, and the weather was cold and wet, with occasional snow. 577 For two whole days Casimiro, Meña, and myself, who were usually messmates, had nothing to eat but an armadillo and a few fish which I caught in a pool of the stream. Near the Column Rock, whilst hunting, we discovered a 'cache,' belonging to Foyel's Indians, which contained something wrapped and lashed up in hides: although the temptation was great to overhaul its contents, the package was left unopened, and a quiet warning conveyed to Foyel that others were not likely to be so scrupulous. This confirmed what Casimiro had said as to these Indians providently leaving bags of fat and provisions in various places to which they expected to return at no very distant period.

484 On the day fixed in the council, held subsequent to the return of the chasquis, we all started, fully equipped, on our journey to Las Manzanas, mustering 250 men of the united Indians, without toldos or baggage, and in light marching order with a few spare horses. A few horses were loaded with coverings for toldos, mantles, &c., which the women hoped to sell to advantage to the Araucanians, and a few of the women accompanied the expedition to conduct their barter, while a guard of perhaps forty men remained behind to provide food for the women and children who were to await our return.

● 133 We crossed the gradually sloping irregular plains covered with stunted bushes, but scarcely deserving the name of high pampas, which bordered the northern side of the valley of Geylum, and after passing between two parallel walls of rocks, forming a sort of natural street, we emerged into a succession of grassy plains, separated by barren rocky hills covered with scrub, on attaining the summits of which the wooded Cordillera on the western side rose into view some few leagues distant. About eleven A.M., after we had been

some four hours on our march, we met two men, bringing 133
with them a pack-horse with a couple of skins of grog for Foyel's people. They were soon surrounded by Tehuelches, who proposed to drink there and then, and were much inclined to help themselves; but a messenger from Foyel's people in the rear arriving, they were permitted to pass unmolested on their way to Geylum, and we proceeded on our journey and formed a circle to hunt. The country became more impracticable for riding as we left the lower plains and mounted some hills broken by deep gorges and bristling in every part with rocks sparkling with unusually large plates of mica, which glistened like glass in the sunshine; these hills were terminated by steep cliffs, over which the ostriches were 224
driven, a party having previously descended to look out for them below. It was a curious sight to see the ostriches dropping down heights varying from ten to fifty feet, often two or three together, with outspread wings. They appeared generally to be stunned for a minute or two on reaching the bottom, and by the time they were on their legs found themselves hampered by a ball from the unerring hand of some stalwart Tehuelche, and running a yard or two fell with broken legs.

Descending from these cliffs we mounted a range of hills 133
more than 2,000 feet high, by means of a tolerably practicable track for travelling, and on arriving at the summit halted for the remainder of the cavalcade. From this point a most magnificent view presented itself; right below us, looking quite close, but really some thirty miles distant, lay a dark line as of a deep cutting, marking the valley of the Rio Limay, which on the west side was terminated by high wooded mountains with steep precipitous sides. Away to the N.W. was a very high snowclad mountain, on which the rays of the setting sun were shedding a rose-coloured light. Between this and the line of the river rose wooded ranges of hills, the real apple groves we had heard so much about; below these again was a low peaked eminence, at the foot of

133 which, invisible to our eyes, lay our destination, viz., the
toldos of Cheoeque. For weeks Las Manzanas and Cheoeque
had been almost the sole topic of conversation, and the general
excitement, which had been intense at starting, now
782 culminated at the sight of our distant bourne. As we halted
the Indians all raised their hands to their foreheads, saluting
the distant river, and inviting the Spirit of the locality to be
propitious to our undertaking, as to the issue of which there
was great uncertainty. The night before Casimiro had
787 pointed out the redness of the setting sun, and declared it
to be an omen of war; but without paying attention to the
omen, which indeed was not perceptible to my eyes, the
unprecedented visit of 250 Tehuelches ostensibly for peace
might very possibly be otherwise understood by Cheoeque:
indeed, it afterwards appeared that he, in reality, was by no
means assured of our pacific intentions.

122 When all were collected and prepared to descend the
mountain, it transpired that Casimiro, who had been missing
since the hunt commenced, had, in company with several
other Tehuelches and Foyel's Indians, returned to drink.
This was very annoying, and all present united in abusing
him for setting such an example when about to enter a part
of the country whither we were going on sufferance, amongst
a not remarkably friendly-disposed set of people. We halted
372 after nightfall in a valley at the side of a small rapid stream,
the banks of which, for a short distance, were covered with
high tussocks of broad-leaved pampa grass, amidst the shelter
of which we bivouacked, although the night was cold and
frosty. Firewood was plentiful, supplied by drift-wood brought
down by winter or spring floods, so with blazing fires and
under the lee of the pampa grass we slept warmly enough.
It was necessary, however, to keep a sharp look-out on the
horses, as pasturage was scanty. Before daylight, after a
133 slight consultation, Guenalto was given chief command,
and we again started; after following a winding valley for a
short distance and scrambling up a steep slope, we continued

to ascend a hill of considerable height, and attained a more 33 open country, the western side of which was bounded by the Cordillera. In one of the valleys bordering the mountains we came suddenly upon the Valdivians, driving their cattle *en route* to return to their own country, Cheoeque having sent orders to the Picunches occupying the country near, the only known passes through the Cordillera, to allow them to traverse their district unmolested; notwithstanding this precaution, they were by no means certain that the Picunches would not ease them of the trouble of taking care of their animals on their arrival in the neighbourhood of the passes. Clearing this open country, we again ascended a slight rise, at the top of which grew a single apple tree in solitary majesty, but it had been stripped long since of its fruit. Descending this one-tree ridge, we entered a cañon, and after half an hour's ride a sudden turn brought the valley of the Rio Limay into view immediately below. Having passed through the cañon, we halted on a slight eminence immediately underneath the barranca bordering the southern side of the valley of the river. From this cliff to the river bank, varying from about a mile to half a mile in width, extended a grassy plain cut up here and there by streams, and wooded at intervals. About a league to the west the barranca blended with the declivities of high precipitous mountains, and the river appeared to force its way from the south between steep precipices before trending into the valley. On the northern side the valley, though dotted here and there with clumps of trees, was more open, and the distance to the barranca greater than that on the southern side. Immediately opposite our post was situated the tolderia of some of Inacayal's Indians, and grazing on the surrounding pastures cattle, sheep, and numerous horses were visible. The river appeared to be of very considerable width, but very rapid through the whole course of this open valley. A mile west of the opening of the cañon three small islands were described, which Hinchel pointed out as the pass, or ford if it deserves

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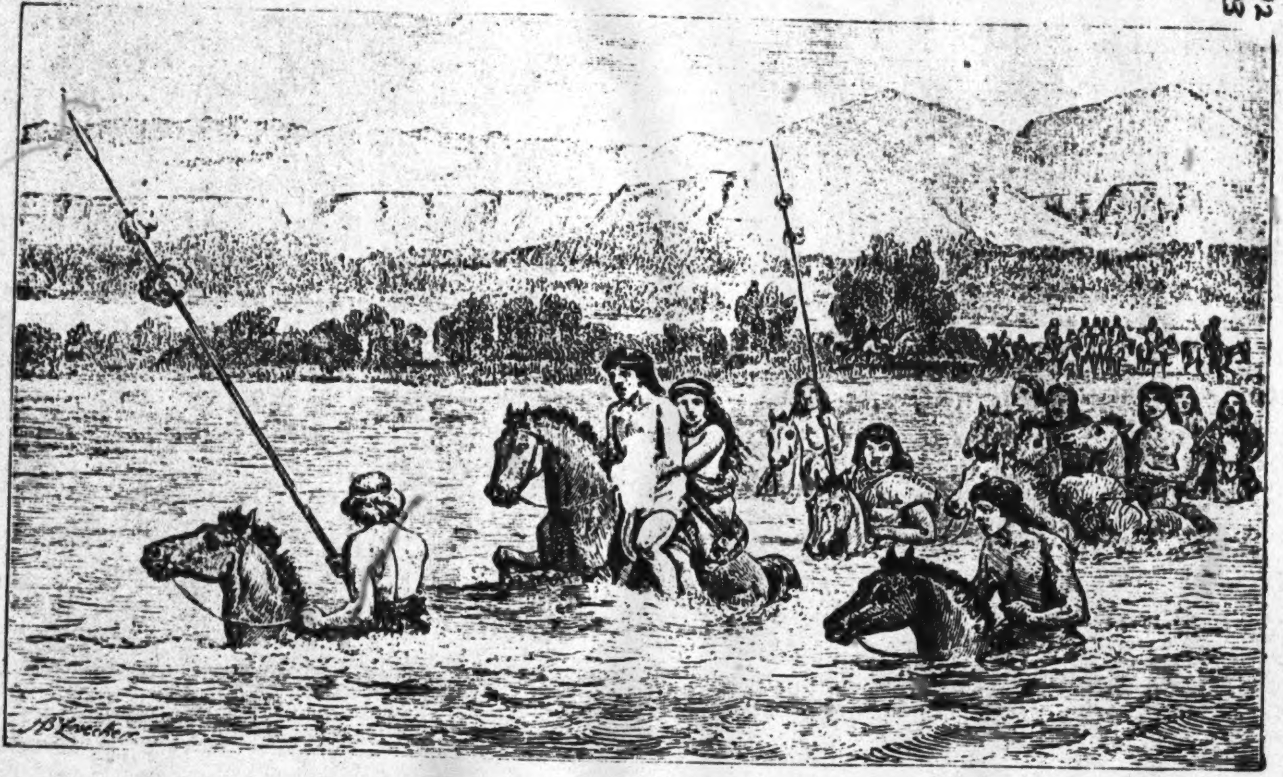
[facing p. 236]



CROSSING THE RIVER LIMAY.

PAGE

● 133 the name. We accordingly proceeded in that direction, and
taking off all unnecessary gear, strapping our mantles close
up, or wearing them like plaids over our shoulders, descended
through the trees and soon plunged into the river.

133 The first part of the ford was deep, but the water then
492 shallowed on nearing the shore, and the velocity of the noisy
stream greatly increased. Still we arrived easily enough
at the first island, but to pass from that to the smaller one
appeared at first to rather daunt even the Tehuelches. The
current was running like a millrace, and the waters foamed
over the uneven bottom with a rush and roar that rendered all
warnings inaudible. It was evident that only strong horses
could cross at all; but one or two bolder spirits dashed in, and
although unacquainted with the pass, reached the second island
some distance down the river in safety, so the remainder
shortly followed, the women crossing behind the men; here and
there were places in The ford which necessitated swimming,
and in others were huge boulders, over which the water
648 swirled in large waves. At last we all reached the bank in
safety, and were met by some of Inacayal's Indians. Being
among the lucky first arrivals, I came in for some apples and
other food that some of these people of Incayal's had
thoughtfully brought with them from the toldos.

When all were mustered and had resumed their clothes, we started for the toldos, where we were received by Inacayal, and as it was needful to await those who had remained behind drinking, we bivouacked by the bank of the river, and shortly some cattle and mares were brought up and slaughtered to satisfy the cravings of our hunger. After bathing in the river, I was sitting by the fireside watching our dinner cooking, when I received a message to say that I was required in one of the toldos. In that indicated I found an old Indian, a brother of Quintuhual, who spoke fluent Spanish; he invited me to sit down, and then narrated that an Englishman named Cox had formerly descended the river from Lake Nahuel-huapi in a boat, but in trying to descend

000 acquaintance with a Pampa Indian named Gravino, who must have originally been a Christian captive; he himself stated that his mother formerly resided near the settlements, and described her as a Pampa Indian; on her death, he, being about fifteen years of age, left the settlements to join the Indians of her tribe, and had got but three days on his journey when he met the united party of Tehuelches, Pampas, and Araucanos, or, as he called them, Chilenos, under the cacique Lenketrou, proceeding to make a raid on the settlements; he had nothing for it but to turn back, and much against his will proceed to rob people under whose protection he had formerly been. In the foray, he, with another youth of about his own age, succeeded in driving off a troop of mixed horses and mares, but being dreadfully tired he laid down to sleep in a retired place, having secured his riding horse by means of a lazo attached to his own ancle. At night he was awoke by a stampede of all the horses; and his own taking fright at the same time dragged him some yards, until disengaged by his companion, who cut the lazo: they then tried to secure their animals, but found that the Araucanians had taken off all the best, so he did not make much by the invasion. He had since been employed as a 'manso' or tame Indian in the service of the Argentine Government, but disliking the work had returned to the Pampas and married a relation of Inacayal's. He was a fine-looking young fellow, neatly dressed in ponchos made, as he informed me, by his wife.

● 133 On the following day, amidst a storm of wind and rain, we started for Las Manzanas. After ascending the northern barrancas of the river valley, we traversed a level plain where a hunting circle was made for form sake, as the ostriches were very scarce, and I only saw one killed; and passing below, or rather to the N.E. of the hill before mentioned, descended into a valley watered by a small stream; this we followed for some distance, until we arrived at a point where another valley opened into it, the two

united forming one of considerable width. Here, under the T 133
shelter of some trees, we halted and lit fires to warm our-
selves, for the drenching rain had by this time thoroughly T A
forced its way through our mantles. Whilst conversing and 579
making as merry as possible under the circumstances, a 648
messenger dashed up, splashed with blood, and with the
effects of drink or furious excitement visible in his face. All
crowded round to hear the news, and he shortly informed
us that the party who had started to obtain apples on the
previous day had met another party of Indians with liquor.
A drinking bout ensued, and a quarrel occurred in which a
man was killed; but the rest went on drinking, leaving the
body outside, where the dogs made a meal of it. This so
exasperated one of his comrades that he galloped off to
Cheoeque, to whose tribe the party belonged, and the chief
at once sent twenty-five horsemen to surround my cousins
and demand payment for the death. This they refused to
give, so a fight took place, in which four out of the five
brothers and another were left for dead, with lance thrusts
all over them, the youngest escaping on his own or some-
body else's horse, after dropping four of the enemy who
tried to intercept him, with a revolver brought by me from
Santa Cruz. This was bad news for us, as we were bound
to protect these people, who belonged to our united Indians.
A consultation took place, in the middle of which Inacayal
dashed up with a party all well armed with lances, in addi-
tion to their other arms. Foyel's people came next, eager
for the fray; the Tehuelches, however, having an eye to
business, in the way of bartering the mantles they had
brought with them for trade, overruled the warlike ideas of
these people, saying 'it was better to wait a little.' Mean-
while guns were loaded and arms got ready, and a party
were being told off to proceed to the scene of the *mêlée* and T
pick up the wounded, when a messenger arrived from A
Cheoeque with proposals of a peace. I and the rest of the 648
relations of those who had been killed, as we then supposed,

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was late and disturbances might occur, he considered it 439
would be better not to allow any liquor to be sold until the
following day, when all arms might be stored in a safe place,
and anybody who felt disposed to get drunk might do so with
comfort. To this Casimiro agreed, further assuring me, in T
the most positive manner, that *he* would keep sober. Whilst A 787
we were sitting by the fireside, a bird, exactly resembling 825
our well-known nightjar, flew over our heads, uttering its
peculiar grating cry; the Indians all looked startled, asserting
that it was a sign of ill luck, and that whenever this
bird croaked in the vicinity of an assembly of people some
one was sure to fall sick or die. Their superstitious belief
in the ill-omened bird received a confirmation, for in the
middle of the night, while asleep by the fire, I was roused
by Graviel, who, shaking my arm and shouting 'Let us go,
let us go!' rushed away from the firelight into the dark
night. His father and myself followed him, and after a long T
chase caught and, with difficulty, mastered him. He was [158]
raving mad, struggling violently, and vociferating incoherent
nonsense. When the fit had passed off, his exhaustion and
prostration were so great that all thought he would die;
but he recovered for the time.

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At break of day we were all on the alert; and as the 361
evening previously we had been too tired and hungry to
observe the scenery, I proceeded to reconnoitre the locality
generally. To my great surprise, the head-quarters of
Cheoeque consisted but of four toldos, belonging to the chief
and his brother-in-law, the men who had received us having
come from distant residences unaccompanied by their wives, T A
and bivouacking, like ourselves, in the open air. The scene 133
of the encampment was a valley running east and west, the 137
western end being apparently shut in by some high mountains,
spurs of the Cordillera. A good stream watered this
valley, which was everywhere more or less wooded: away to
the north-west, about four miles distant, the apple-groves
might be seen; these trees had, however, already been

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133 stripped of fruit, and it was necessary to proceed much
137 farther to the north to procure any; but an expedition to
visit that district and to get fruit, planned by Orkeke,
Hinchel, myself, and others, proved impracticable. Beyond
the apple-groves the place was also pointed out where the
araucarias grow, from which the piñones are gathered, just
below the snow-clad mountains we had viewed from the
A ridge above the Rio Limay, and about thirty miles distant.

231 In our valley the pasture was rather scanty, although
422 there appeared to be sufficient for the three flocks of small
sheep, each owned by one of Cheoeque's wives, to get into
A good condition; but sheep will feed anywhere. Immediately
[417] behind the toldos was situated a corral for enclosing cattle,
none of which, however, were visible, having, probably, been
driven off to some secluded valley near at hand, to avoid
T giving our people a chance of helping themselves. Round
A this corral were grouped the Indians of Cheoeque's tribe,
361 and the Picunches with fruit, &c., to barter; and between
the corral and the river lay the bivouac of the Tehuelches;
our fireside being denoted by Casimiro's flag, the colours of
the Argentine Confederation. Up and down the valley, and
A even about the neighbouring hills, were scattered our horses.
342 Proceeding to inspect the toldos, at which I had given but a
cursory glance the night before, I found that they were all
fixed dwellings; that is to say, not put together so as to
be moved in marches, like those of the Patagonians. They
were, indeed, constructed in the same manner, but the poles
were much stouter, and the whole edifice more resembled a
house.

Cheoeque's toldo was quite sixteen feet high, and able to accommodate forty men; while three fires of huge billets of wood burned in the front part. It was closed in completely, except a doorway in the corner with a skin curtain by way of door; and along the front ran a species of verandah, composed of interwoven branches, forming a pleasant canopy, under the shade of which we sat and

431 We proceeded to Inacayal's toldo at his personal request, where we remained until evening was drawing on, when cattle were brought up, caught and slain, and divided amongst the chiefs. Whilst busy shaving a piece of hide wherewith to make some gear, I received a message from Orkeke, whose fire was situated at perhaps a hundred paces from ours, that he wished to see me when disengaged, and after supper I strolled down, and found the veteran sitting loading his pipe. After a smoke, he invited me to accompany him to inspect his newly-acquired troop of horses, and show him which I considered to be the best. I picked out a young white animal that had belonged to Cheoeque's own stud. 'Very well,' he replied, 'take him; he is yours; I never made you any return for the revolver you gave me in Teckel.' Although I did not require the horse, it would have been insulting to refuse it, so I walked off with my racer in tow. This little incident is mentioned to correct the notion entertained by some that the greed of gain is a predominant feature in the Indian character.

● 133 The following morning we bid adieu to Inacayal and his people, and turned our horses' heads for the pass of the river Limay, which was if possible more swollen and rapid than on the previous occasion; but we all crossed in safety, although Casimiro's and my horse fell once, fortunately where the water was shallow. Everybody, however, got thoroughly wet, and a continual downfall of rain coming on, prevented all chance of drying our mantles. We marched back by a route lying to the westward of that we had before followed, passing under and amongst the high wooded mountains, on the heights of which every now and then we could perceive a condor sitting in majestic solitude, looking down on us like a priest from a pulpit.

000 About four P.M. the rain cleared off, and we bivouaced in a grassy valley, with incense and other bushes growing on the sides. Here, owing to the sickness of Graviel and another of our party, we passed a miserable time, not even

CHAPTER VIII.

GEYLUM TO PATAGONES.

A Sick Camp—Oerroè Volcanic Hill—Crimè's Deathbed—Graviel's Promotion—The Burning Ground—Hot Springs—Fighting the Gualichu—A Real Fight—A Soda Lake—Encampment at Telck—The Doctor comes to Grief—An Obliging Ostrich—Appointed Chasqui—Miseries of Pampa Life—A Bad Time—The Plains of Margensho—Casimiro's Distrust—Doctor and Sick Child—Duties of a Messenger—Departure of the Chasquis—Travelling Express—The Paved Pampas—An Ideal Bandit—Letter from the Chupat Colony—Trinita—Teneforo's Pampas—Champayo's Generosity—A Morning Drink—Departure from Trinita—Valchita—The Pigs' Road—Wild Horses—The Travesia—Limit of the Patagonian Fauna and Flora—First View of the Rio Negro—Sauce Blanco—The Guardia—San Xaviel—Approach to Patagones—Señor Murga—Welsh Hospitality—Among Friends at Last.

WE were now fairly started on our journey eastward to 133 the Rio Negro, on my part with contending feelings of regret at quitting my recently acquired and amiable relatives, and of joyful expectation of reaching Patagones and finding there that which travellers, amidst all the excitement of new countries and strange people, still so eagerly long for—news from home! We galloped forward casting longing looks behind at the forest-clad slopes and snowy peaks of the Cordillera, the never-to-be-forgotten beauty of which made the dismal prospect of the country before us still more dreary.

My friends had been unanimous in describing the district that intervened between Geylum and a place spoken of as Margensho, nine marches distant, as both difficult to travel, and affording scanty pasture for the horses and little game for the people.

[p.261]

occupied or distracted, and the business of catching the [164]
horses devolved on myself, single-handed at first. Having 000
secured the troop, the next task was to catch my newly-acquired steed; the sight of a lazo was sufficient to make him gallop a league, and as he was very swift, three hours were spent in ineffectual efforts, but at last, two or three of my comrades coming up to my assistance, he was caught. Giving my flibbertigibbet page charge of the remaining horses, I started, in company with one of my friends, to join the hunting circle, already in course of formation.

We rode up a valley in an easterly direction, on our way 758
passing the invalid Crimè, who, groaning with pain, lay stretched out at full length on a sort of couch composed of blankets on the horse's back, his wife leading the horse and
wailing out loud. But as condolences were of little use, we 133
passed on in silence, and shortly emerged from the valley which sloped up by gradual ascent to a wide plain of sandy soil and stunted bushes, bounded on the eastern horizon by a line of high jagged hills, which stretched to the southward as far as the eye could reach. While sitting under a bush by the fire, I was attacked with headache and sickness, the premonitory symptoms of the epidemic; however, I mounted and joined the hunting party, and at the end of the circle felt much better, although unable to eat.

The finish brought us to the entrance of a valley which wound among the precipitous rocky hills of the range seen from the farther verge of the plain. While watching the cavalcade of women and baggage, I looked long in vain for my own troop of four horses, but at last descried them trotting without a guide in the rear of the column, their natural sagacity or perhaps thirst having induced them to follow their comrades. The trusty page had left them to take care of themselves, and gone off hunting on his own account, which behaviour, repeated on a subsequent occasion, caused the loss of the stud. Towards evening we encamped in a valley enclosed by three hills, one of which, of decidedly

133 volcanic aspect, was named 'Oerroè.' The side of this hill [411] was thickly scattered with fragments of the vesicular lava which furnishes the favourite material for the hand bolas. 000 As most of us had exchanged our weapons of the chase for apples, piñones, &c., in Las Manzanas, many were soon employed picking stones and fashioning bolas. I took very good care that my page should be unprovided with hunting implements, but, alas! here he fell sick, or pretended to be, and was just as useless as before. The day after our arrival 763 Crimè's sufferings were terminated. I received a summons to his death-bed; the cacique, though wandering, knew his friends, and called all to witness that his death had been caused by a Southern Tehuelche whom he named and described, and then, raising his arm, pointed to a vacant space and cried, 'Look at him, there he stands.' He then asked me to 'feel his arm,' and as, to please him, I laid my finger on his pulse, it beat slower and slower, till, with a sudden gasp, he died. According to etiquette, we silently retired, and the toldo resounded with the clamorous crying of the women and 764 the wailing of his widow. The usual funeral rites were hurriedly gone through, but most were too absorbed in their 165 own troubles to participate in them. During the night three children died, and more were at death's door; and, the supply of horseflesh from the funeral victims being abundant, all thoughts of marching were abandoned, and the camp resounded with the lamentations of the women. In our toldo all the inmates were sick, and the duty of looking after the horses devolved on myself and Casimiro, who was recovering from his attack.

591 We were joined in this place by Hinchel's son with his Araucanian wife, with whom another man came to look for a girl who had run away from Foyel's toldo, but his quest proved fruitless, as she remained invisible, stowed away in some of the toldos. This man brought further news that 203 Cheoeque's people, renewing the old feud, were arming to fight now that we had gone; also that a man had been killed in a

drunken brawl since our departure, and that a rumour was current 203
that the Valdivians had had their cattle taken from them,
and various other stories, most of which were declared to be
lies by Orkeke, who, having lost a horse, had returned to look
for it in Geylum; the budget of alarming news thus proving
to be a fresh illustration of the Indian's proneness to invent
if they have nothing of real importance wherewith to astonish
their hearers. Crimé's widow took up her abode in our toldo; 779
and as, by this chief's death, the post of capitanejo, with the 622
rank of lieutenant in the Buenos Ayrean army, and the right
of drawing rations, was vacant, Casimiro consulted me as to
his successor. But successive proposals of those who seemed
most fit, beginning with Wáki, were objected to by the cacique,
who at last declared that he should name his almost insane
son Graviel as the chief to be placed by the Argentine
Government upon the list of the caciques to be conciliated
by annual pay! On April 22 a start was made, but we
remained to the last, as four of Casimiro's horses which I had
brought down to the valley the previous evening were missing,
so the chieftain returned to look for them, and the rest of the
toldo pursued their journey.

After taking a farewell look at the Cordillera, which was 133
presently shut out from view by the hills, the counterslope
of which we descended, a hurried march led us through a
very barren rocky country entangled in broken irregular
hills, with scarcely a bush to shelter under, and little or no
pasture. We encamped, or rather reached the camp after 241
it was pitched, in a cañon containing a small spring and a
very little green pasture, and went to bed supperless, as, not
being in time for the hunt, and game being very scarce,
what we could beg from our neighbours was naturally given
to those recovering from sickness.

Jackechan's wife and child were still very unwell, and, as 758
the child was supposed to be dying, the doctor was sent for.
He proceeded to cure it by laying it on the ground, muttering
a charm and patting it on the head; after which he put

75 his mouth close to its chest and shouted to bring the devil out: he then turned it on its face and repeated the same process. The child's health mended next day, and it was shortly out of danger.

229 About ten o'clock at night Casimiro returned with his horses, which had strayed a considerable distance on the road back to Geylum. The next day a long march of twenty miles brought us to an encampment on the western verge of a broad plain, watered by a brooklet. During the [34] hunt the first Patagonian hares, or cavies, were caught. These little animals live in burrows, but are generally out feeding or sleeping in the grass during the day. They are excessively swift for perhaps a mile, but, like the foxes of this country soon get tired. The chase of these small deer afforded an agreeable relief to the monotony of the journey. As soon as we entered a plain or valley where they abounded, as they always were found in numbers where the pasture was good, all hurried off to 'stop the earths,' i.e., close up the burrows with bushes; but the cunning little beasts often evaded us by slipping into a burrow overlooked by the earth-stoppers. It required considerable skill to bring them down with the bolas, as, if only caught round the legs or body, they disentangled themselves quickly, but a blow on the head [242 proved at once fatal. They are good eating, though the flesh 281] is somewhat dry when roasted. Their skins are made up into mantles, but are of little value, as the hair soon comes off.

123 About a mile below the encampment, where the sandy plain narrowed and sloped down to a low-lying grassy valley, a singular phenomenon presented itself. The morning after our arrival, when going out to look for the horses, a furious easterly gale whirled the dust aloft in dense clouds, and, to my great surprise, the sand, which was driven into our faces, was as hot as when the fire so nearly encircled us. Almost blinded in forcing our way through this curtain of driving sand, we rode right into a hollow, where the earth appeared to be on fire; as the horses plunged

through the heated surface the hair was burnt off their fetlocks, and they were nearly maddened with fright, so that it was a difficult feat for the riders without saddles or stirrups to keep their seats. Once I was somewhere near my horse's ears, but, more by good luck than good management, just escaped being thrown as it were into the fire. After the gale had partially moderated, I proceeded to inspect this place, and found that, although not, as I at first thought, absolutely on fire, the ground was smoking as if from internal combustion. The surface presented a crust of baked yellow clay, which yielding to the horses' feet, disclosed a black subsoil; there was no flame, but a thin white vapour issued from the ground. When I incautiously ventured a step on the treacherous crust, it gave way, but I managed to extricate myself with no further damage than burning my potro boots. The Indians stated that the fire had been originally caused some years previously by their having kindled the pasture higher up the valley, and that the ground had been burning ever since. It was impossible to discover whether there was any subjacent bed of combustible matter 133 which might thus have been ignited; but as there are hot- 312 wells and springs in the same range not many miles distant to the south-east, it seems more probably due to volcanic agency. The principal hot spring was described as a circular basin of about six feet in diameter, the water, of a temperature not so hot as to scald the hand, bubbling up through numerous holes in a clay bottom. In many of the surrounding hills there are lava and pumice of not extremely ancient formation; some of the hills have also an appearance of having been at a recent period the outlets of eruptive forces, which have scattered large shattered masses of rock over the sides of the extinct craters.

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In this encampment I had a serious misunderstanding with [illegible] our chief, which all but ended in a downright quarrel; but after consideration we agreed to make it up, as although on two occasions of danger he had left me to my fate, I thought

000 it better on the whole to keep friends for the present. The
648 evening of this quarrel, as a party of three toldos were starting
off to go to the Chupat, and Casimiro was desirous of
extending his fame to the Welsh settlement, I wrote a letter
to the authorities inquiring about some saddles, part of his
Argentine rations sent thither by mistake, which the chief
declared to have been intended for him, but which had been
distributed amongst other Indians. The letter was forwarded
144 by one of the Indians who was supposed to be of English
parentage on one side, although he showed but little traces
of English blood in his type, with the exception perhaps of
his hair, which was of a lighter colour than that usually met
with: he was a very good-natured fellow, and I regretted his
departure, as he was one of my adherents, but being a man
of very sober habits he did not wish to be mixed up in the
universal orgie which would probably take place on arriving
000 in the vicinity of Patagones. With this party the young
widow, who had made overtures of marriage to me, also
departed, after an affectionate farewell, and receiving a handkerchief
as a remembrance. The following morning we also
started, and one of the universal loafers who had gambled
his property away, asking for a mount, was told to catch the
'white horse' presented by Orkeke: he accordingly borrowed
a horse to catch him, and at the end of our day's journey had
not succeeded in doing more than driving him in, to use a
nautical term, in our wake; this was exactly what I had
intended, as this Indian was a great rogue, and had cheated
me at cards out of a set of metal bolas, equivalent to a horse.

● 133 Our march lay up the valley, and the circle was formed on
the surrounding volcanic hills, the sides of which, besides the
vesicular lava, presented large masses of the ironstone noted
as having been observed at Santa Cruz. Shrubs were sparsely
scattered on these hills, and game was exceedingly scarce.

165 Towards evening we encamped on the borders of a stream
764 in a place called by the Indians Telck. There the sickness
broke out afresh in its worst form, and several children died,

137 We remained some days in this place, and whilst hunting
in the surrounding country (where hares abounded), we observed
a new description of spinous shrub with small ovate
leaves and yellow flowers, resembling holly, and growing to
about two feet in height. Casimiro and myself agreed to try
757 whether the leaves might not be medicinal, so a quantity were
bruised and boiled: the infusion proved exceedingly bitter,
reminding me of quinine, and acted as an admirable sudorific,
being administered to the invalids with great success. In
● 133 one of our excursions we had crossed the hills and descended
on a high elevated plain, concluding our hunt near a swelling
eminence exactly resembling a huge 'barrow' thickly
overgrown with shrubs, from which what appeared to be a
salina was espied, to our great delight. Hinchel and myself
being alone, and having a fat ostrich to discuss for dinner,
determined to enjoy our meal by its shore, first testing the
quality of the salt, a luxury which we had long been destitute
of. Dismounting, we proceeded to investigate it; but
to our great disappointment, after walking over every part of
[135] it, and digging down with knives a foot below the surface, the
supposed salt proved to be bitter and nauseous nitrate of soda.

132 After quitting the vicinity of the Cordillera the weather
had every day become warmer, and the frosts at night much
lighter: indeed whilst in Telck some warm days were experienced,
although the winter season was fast approaching.
137 Near this encampment the small edible root previously described
as growing in the dried-up lagoons was found in
abundance, and was collected by the women and children.

[136] Cavies were plentiful in the hollows and valleys in the
neighbouring hills, and even close to the encampment, but
the chase of other game proved difficult, the hill sides being
so strewn with stones as to render galloping a horse a
777 certainty of laming him. In this neighbourhood Hinchel
pointed out a detached pinnacle of rock, much resembling
that noticed at Geylum, and according to custom invoked a
135 blessing from the guardian spirit; and then he informed me

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that on the third next march we should pass a deposit of 135 yellow ore, lying to the south of the route, and that during the hunt he would show it to me. Orkeke also corroborated this statement, and I have every reason to believe that there is in that locality a deposit of iron or more probably copper ore.

As the meat of the slain horses was nearly consumed, we 133 marched the following day across a most stony, rocky, and inhospitable country, and at length arrived at a range of hills, through which ran a steep, narrow gorge. Descending through its tortuous windings, we at length arrived at a spring, the waters of which, joining with another small rivulet, flowed out, and formed a sort of marsh at the head of a large plain. From the slope of the hill bordering the ravine a fine panorama extended to the east, the entire face of the country appearing to be more uniformly undulating than the confused ranges of hills, through the intricacies of which we had been marching and hunting since leaving Geylum. In the foreground were visible distant black figures, moving with swiftness across the plain in pursuit of numerous ostriches; and away to the eastward rose a column of smoke, the cause of which was eagerly speculated on.

I am conscious that the description of this part of the 114 journey is not likely to give a very clear idea of the country traversed; and that the directions of the successive ranges, and the general character of the ground, are left too much to the reader's imagination; but, in deprecation of criticism and censure, it is pleaded that I was under the impression that this district had been traversed, and accurately surveyed and described, by a *savant* employed by the Argentine Government; and that I was deprived of the assistance of my compass, which had been presented to Foyel. The notes taken at the time were very scanty, and my recollections were confused, inasmuch as I was labouring under a constantly-recurring attack of sickness, which was only kept at bay by resolute endeavours not to give way; but which ren-

114 dered observation and record, in addition to hunting and the usual toils of marching, impossible. It was the more needful for me to endeavour to keep up, as all were more or less ill, and becoming increasingly gloomy and dispirited. To
753 add to the troubles which weighed down the Indians' spirits at this place, the doctor's horse fell while descending a precipitous rocky hill. The unfortunate physician was stunned, and very nearly crushed to death by the horse falling on him; great grief was universally expressed at this catastrophe, as no one was left to cure the invalids and contend with the malignant Gualichu, who, it was natural for the Indians to imagine, had laid a trap for his opponent, and upset the medicine man's steed in order to have the field clear for himself.

136 We encamped in a sort of morass, by the side of the hills overlooking the plain, and were woke at daylight by the chattering of a flock of blue and orange paroquets; these birds, which brought back old pleasant associations of the banks of the Parana, and almost seemed to be harbingers of civilised life, were numerous in this locality, though they were the first of the species that I had observed in the country.

202 The distant signal smoke was concluded to indicate the presence of Jackechan and the Pampa Indians under Teneforo, and all were in spirits at the prospect of obtaining news, and perhaps luxuries in the shape of flour, yerba, &c., from Patagones. The order was accordingly given to march, and a large answering signal fire kindled in some dry pasture bordering the hill side, a messenger being at the same time despatched to ascertain the news. After a rather long
● 133 march over a barren plain strewn with angular masses of chalcedony and projecting rocks resembling alabaster, we arrived at a dreary encampment, sheltered under a bank, from which a spring gushed out, forming a refreshing rivulet.

005 The mutiny of my page had compelled me to enjoy the pleasure of driving my own cattle, following the track in

203 be peaceable at Patagones, and a rumour was current that
Commandante Murga was about to give up his governorship.
Casimiro, on receiving all this intelligence, immediately
wished a despatch to be indited, although I pointed out to
him that it would be better to wait until we had arrived at a
nearer point; he was so urgent that on the following morning
I composed an elaborate letter, detailing the union of the
tribes, the precautions taken for protecting Patagones, and
requesting a hundred mares for Casimiro and his *people*:
when finished it was carefully wrapped up and stowed away
in my baggage till wanted.

202 The talk then naturally turned on the subject of the choice
of messengers to be despatched to Patagones on our arrival
at Margensho. It had been previously arranged that I
should be sent fully commissioned, as being better able to
represent to the authorities what had been resolved on, as well
as to impress upon them the immediate requirements of the Indians,
and several others now volunteered to accompany me,
and got quite merry at the thoughts of a drink. But we were
still three marches distant from Margensho. The following
● 133 day we were again *en route*, traversing a succession of plains
with rocky ridges cropping up at intervals, until we at
length reached a grassy valley enclosed by steep walls of
rocks sixty feet high; gravely perched on the summits of
[136] which several slate-coloured Chilian eagles were visible,
their occupation being to prevent the excessive multiplication
of little cavies. On the hill sides bordering this valley,
our old friend the incense bush, which had for many marches
back been very scarce, grew in luxuriant profusion. At this
[272] season it was covered with berries which, though uneatable,
are used by the Indians mixed up with water as a drink;
this infusion has a very sweet taste, but I should think
must be very unwholesome. On arriving at the encampment,
165 at the head of the valley, near some pools of standing
water, we were apprised, by the lugubrious sounds of the
women's monotonous chants, that the number of the children

152 One misery, starvation, had certainly been avoided by the abundance of horse-flesh, but it can easily be imagined that we could have borne hunger better. We had endured cold, and hunger, and fatigue, as well as danger, before, but nothing has left so indelible an impression of a thoroughly bad time as that march from Geylum to Margensho.

000 At last Casimiro issued orders to march, and with two or three more of us started in advance. While waiting under the shelter of a mass of rocks for the remainder to overtake us, I fell asleep, and on waking up found the rain pouring down in torrents, and the chief just directing Meña to return and see what the women were about. Our page arrived a little later to say that the Indians had refused to march, the occupants of our toldo alone being on their way to join us: these soon appeared, so we proceeded in the storm, having agreed that to return, after having once started, would be an ignominious proceeding.

133 We followed for some distance the valley, or rather the
plain, into which it had opened out, and then ascended some
abrupt rocky heights at its eastern extremity; crossing these
hills, in the valleys or ravines of which incense bushes grew
[137] almost like a forest, we halted for a time by the side of a
rivulet flowing from a spring on the hill side.

133 After kindling a fire to warm our bodies, wet as we were
132 and chilled by the wind, which, originally west, now blew
from the south with cutting violence, the sight of numerous
guanaco on the heights above determined us to encircle a
herd; we accordingly mounted the heights, and having
completely failed in our attempt, descended to the other
side. A large lagoon lay at our feet, and away to the east
a succession of plains extended to the encampment called
Margensho.

133 These plains were bounded for a short distance on the north side by a range of hills, which came to an abrupt termination at the end of the lagoon, on the south side by another range gradually sloping to the eastward, and on the

western side by the rocky heights we were descending. The 133 view would have been enjoyable on a fine day, but in such a Patagonian tempest of rain and wind, landscapes were by no means appreciated. Near the lagoon was another herd of guanaco, some three thousand strong, who tempted us to a vain endeavour to encircle them, but they descried us before we could approach within a mile, and were soon lost to sight on the plains leading towards Margensho. Whilst riding down the edge of the hills Casimiro pointed out some [137] thyme, a little of which we gathered to flavour our soup with in the evening. We then descended, and sheltered under the overhanging bank of a dry watercourse leading to the lagoon. The women and remainder of the cavalcade shortly arrived, and loading my page with firewood, to his intense disgust and the extreme delight of every one else, we proceeded a little farther to the south, where the pasture was good, and established ourselves for the night.

The following morning early we all started to hunt, and 132 were more successful than on the previous day, though the wind was blowing a fearful gale from the S.W., with occasional storms of sleet. Towards the afternoon, by which time, having finished our hunting, we were snug enough under the toldo, it rained hard, and with the rain the Indians commenced to arrive, till before dusk a town of toldos occupied the borders of the hills.

Casimiro this evening sent for volunteers to go in with 434 me as messengers or chasquis to Patagones, on our arrival at Margensho, now but one march distant. But of those previously so desirous to go on, not one appeared, nor would any one Indian consent to lend his horses for so long a journey. The chieftain was sadly put out, and cursed the caciquillos all round. He then tried to dissuade me from going myself, saying that it was a great distance, that the desert or travesia was a fearful place, that I should probably lose my horses, that many people had starved, at the same time wishing me to lend my horses to some other Indian.

ing incantations; when this was completed, the doctor 755 disappeared for a minute or two, returning with an ornamented hide bag in his hand; this he opened, and produced from the bottom some charms carefully enveloped in rags, which he, after performing some mystic hocus-pocus, returned to the bag. He next took the baby from the mother, and patting it gently on the head, and muttering in a low tone, dipped its head into the bag two or three times, and then returned it to its mother. A white mare was brought up, and, after being daubed all over with hand-marks of red ochre, was knocked on the head, cooked, and eaten on the spot, the heart, liver, and lungs being hung on a lance, to the top of which was suspended the bag containing the charms. Care was taken, as in other ceremonies, that no dogs approached to eat the offal, which was buried, the head and backbone being removed to a neighbouring hill.

On the 9th of May we started, arriving the same evening 133 at Margensho, which was, as the Indians had previously described it to me, a large grassy plain lying below a step or barranca, and watered by a brook running N.E. and S.W. During the hunt over the previously described plains there was nothing remarkable except the extreme scarcity of game, skunks alone being numerous; fortunately I killed a male guanaco, and as I had the previous day corrected my page he brought up the horses most carefully, so that all was in readiness for an early start. Before sundown the chiefs 622 were collected, and the contents of the letter[1] read to them; they all appeared pleased, and after adding a postscript setting forth the names and number of the chiefs who required rations I closed the correspondence.

Hinchel came and provided me with tobacco, asking as a favour that if any of his friends in the settlement should inquire if he got drunk when occasion offered in the pampas, I would bear witness to his sobriety; he also entreated that I would either return to the Indians or remain in Patagones until he arrived, which latter I promised to do.

[1] [Letter to be delivered to the Argentine authorities--Analyst]

484 passed the time in talking over what we would get, how we should be received, and in smoking and singing. Our route lay along the barranca, which changed as we proceeded in a N.E. direction, to higher rugged hills interspersed with sandy valleys covered with scrub and incense bushes.

By nightfall we had arrived at a pointed hill, under the brow of which we encamped. We had seen plenty of ostrich and guanaco, but had not delayed to hunt, only pausing to pick up an armadillo that happened to be basking in our road.

On dismounting we secured all the horses with lazos or manéos, as they might probably be inclined to stray away. After gathering a little firewood, kindling a fire, and discussing the armadillo and a small piece of meat each, we wrapped ourselves in our mantles and lay down to sleep, every now and again during the night getting up to have a look at the horses. The morning star was shining brightly above the horizon when we saddled up, and crossing the brow of the hill mounted to an adjoining pampa, where the rocky nature of the ground obliged our unshod horses to go at a foot pace. Added to this a bitter cold wind and small driving rain were not improving to the temper, until after an hour or two of difficult and slow travelling, the sun rose
magnificently and dispelled the mists and drizzle, and
484 restored our cheerfulness. We at length descended into a
133 ravine leading to a series of small valleys, containing here
and there ponds covered with teal and other water birds.
[136] We travelled at a gallop through the same description of
country till five P.M., when, after passing a high barren
plateau, similar to that encountered at starting, we suddenly
came to an abrupt declivity, at the bottom of
which, in a plain extending for about five miles, lay a large
salina.

484 We descended where it was feasible, and after stopping to get a little salt, proceeded to encamp near a small spring of fresh water. About a mile to the eastward large herds of

484 search of an hour they were found, having wandered in
search of better water, and, wiser than ourselves, found out
a spring about two miles to the east.

The sun was up before we got away, after warming and
eating the last of our food, which we had cooked overnight
it was dry and dusty, and all the washing in the world could
not have got the grit out of it; however, we laughed over
it, saying we would soon have a bottle of wine to wash away
the dirt from our throats. One thing we congratulated ourselves on was being well provided with tobacco, and although
we boasted no pipe, mine having been lost at a previous
encampment, Casimiro's correspondence with Foyel and
Cheoeque, which I had carefully kept, provided us with
484 cigarette papers. We rode on accordingly, rejoicing, and
133 passing out of this wooded country traversed a succession of
high pampas, set with small blocks of granite exactly resembling paving-stones, and placed as thickly and regularly
as if paviors had been at work. The appearance of a
London street undergoing repair brought this singular
formation vividly to my mind. These pampas terminated in
waterworn cliffs thickly strewn with stones, and as our horses
scrambled like cats up the slopes, their hoofs sent the stones
clattering down, and they found it hard to keep their footing.
At the foot of the cliffs were watered valleys, and whilst
descending into one of these valleys I noticed for the first
[137] time the algarroba thorn, which was in fruit. There were
two sorts, one with black fruit, which Nacho warned me not
to touch, as it was poisonous, the other bearing yellow pods,
[262] which though somewhat dry, as the season was so advanced,
we plucked and ate as we rode along, the taste proving something between tamarinds and peach.

576 Near a lagoon in one of these valleys we halted for a few minutes, and on pursuing our journey espied a horseman with a troop of led horses approaching from the opposite side. I had halted for a moment and saw my companions rein up, and racing up to know the cause, observed him. When within

484 We were soon out of sight of the encampment at Trinita, and proceeding at either a gallop or a trot through an undulating country, in which incense, algarroba, and other shrubs abounded, arrived near sunset at a stream, on the north side of which we encamped, amongst some thick bushes. A little distance to the west lay a large salina, from which, several miles across, the place takes its name, being called Hitchinkaik, or Salt Hill. The stream flows round one side of the salina, and is, I think, the same that we subsequently crossed near Valchita. This time we travelled in great style, the women having brought with them stores of horse-meat and yerba.

263 After dinner we all sat round the fire and took a matè, and some of an Indian sweetmeat, a yellow paste made from the algarroba bean pounded and mixed with water. Old 000 Patricio, who had turned over a new leaf, and grown quite frisky after the drink, said that I was a fortunate man, having a wife with me; alluding to one of the wives of the cacique El Ingles, who was travelling with us to rejoin her husband near Patagones.

484 137 The following morning at daylight we again started, and travelling over much the same description of country as on the previous day, arrived about midday at the place where Teneforo had left his cattle. Here we dismounted and refreshed ourselves off the round berries about the size of a turnip-radish, the fruit of a small plant growing by the margin of the water, which had a very pleasant taste. The river here had a fringe of tussocks of pampa grass, under which we reclined and smoked.

484 133 The cattle were grouped about amongst these tussocks, and Golwin, Jackechan's son with the light hair, amused himself by vain attempts to count them. After half an hour's dawdling we proceeded, leaving behind one of Meña's horses which was done up, and, following more or less the line of the river, we arrived, about three P.M., at the encampment of Valchita. As it was early in the day, some of the party

started to hunt, but returned empty-handed. We filled up 434
the skins and water-bottles, in anticipation of entering the 133
travesia the following day; and, after the usual meal and
matè, sought out each his own particular nest in the pampa
grass, and went to sleep without fear of the horses straying
far, the pasture and water being both of the best quality.
As it was in this encampment that, according to Casimiro,
the defunct Mendoza had discovered gold, I prospected carefully
for any signs, but only noticed that parts of the
adjoining pampa were strewn, amongst other pebbles, with
pieces of quartz. At the usual hour we started to commence
the ascent to the travesia, or desert, which rose above us
to the north, in a high plateau. On ascending a short
distance, we observed on our left hand (to the westward) a [135]
salina of several leagues in length, which bordered the edge
of the travesia in about an east or west direction. I am
inclined to think that the river Valchita loses itself in this
salina. This river is subject to great floods, evidences of
which were visible in the drift weeds and rubbish clinging
to the bushes and shrubs throughout the valley, evidently
left there by the spring inundation. By a gradual ascent
we at length reached the level of the plateau, and saw before
us an interminable dreary expanse strewn with small shingle,
and covered with shrubs varying from four to twelve feet, or
even higher, and here and there small tufts of grass. No
signs of life were visible. The sky was bright and clear,
although clouds were gathering in the southern horizon,
and the wind (it nearly always blows in Patagonia) was
cutting. I remarked to Luiz Aguirre that it would possibly 521
rain; his reply, 'I hope it will—it will be splendid, then all
the lagoons will be full,' told of the danger of drought, but
found no assent from me, having had enough of wet weather
during the excursion to Las Manzanas. During the ride he
told me that he knew the difference between the Catholic
and Protestant religions, and of the two he preferred the
latter; he also asked me if I had ever been to China, where

521 the tea came from, and various other questions evincing a considerable amount of information; and wound up by proposing that I should set up a trading establishment near the Chupat; Jackechan—who, if any one can claim it, is the real lord of the soil—having volunteered to cede the ground to me. In the event of establishing a store in that neighbourhood, this astute Indian considered that all the Indian trade would be taken out of the hands of the people of Patagones, who notoriously used false weights, besides charging exorbitantly for all articles supplied to the Indians.

484 About two P.M., as the rough shingle had already begun
133 to tell on our horses' feet, a halting-place was found near a
laguna containing rain-water of the colour of *café au lait.*
The horses were for the present let loose, to pick up the best
meal they could off the stunted grass near the borders of the
lagoon. Before dark most of them were tethered, and a
careful watch kept all night, lest they should return to
Valchita in search of pasture and water. After a lengthened
conversation by the fireside—in which I was informed that
the track we were travelling was called Pigs' Road, from
[136] wild pigs, or perhaps peccaries, having been killed near one
of the lagoons in the route—we wrapped ourselves in our
mantles and sheltered ourselves like hedgehogs under the
bushes, from time to time getting up to look round for the
horses. Next day we rode over the same interminable
137 desert of stones, and bushes of the following descriptions:
chañal or whitethorn; picayun, furnishing the best firewood;
the osier-like switches before described; black bush,
which is useless for burning, owing to the pestiferous smell
it emits; algarroba, incense, which are, however, very scarce;
and some others whose names I was unable to procure. The
chañal is the only one that impedes the traveller's progress,
as the thorns are large and sharp. In the other road (more
to the west), which we had avoided, although the distance is
shorter across the travesia, and therefore more used by the
Tehuelches, who dread this crossing, especially in summer

or for small parties, the chañal grows to the height of ten 137
to fifteen feet, and, like the 'waitabit' thorns in Albania,
renders fast riding impossible.

This day we were about to start hunting, when a demi- 425
john of rum was discovered in a bush. This put an end to the sport, for, although it was hidden again in another place, enough was taken out to render most of the party talkative, a bottle or two also being reserved for discussion at the camp fire.

At four P.M. we encamped by the side of a lagoon similar 484
to the previous one, and, our Valchita water being finished, diluted the rum with meal and water about the consistency of Spanish chocolate. I forgot to state that in the excitement of the 'find' the horses were not looked after, and on mustering to proceed, one of Nacho's had disappeared, and, although carefully searched for, he was not found again.

The next day, despite the dissipations over night, we 136
were in the saddle at daybreak, and had hardly traversed a 484
league of this wearisome waste when we came suddenly upon seven wild horses. An effort made to surround them failed, owing to the difficult nature of the ground; but the failure was to me fully made up by the magnificent spectacle of these splendid creatures careering in their untamed strength and beauty across the plain.

We subsequently hunted and killed guanaco and ostrich, 133 ●
and also saw some hares and partridges. At about ten A.M. 484
our eyes were gladdened by the sight of the sea, and presently the level plain rose into more undulating country, and from the crests of the elevations at times a full view of the inlet called the Laco de San Antonio presented itself.

Smoke was visible ahead, and we accordingly pushed on, and made a long and rapid march, the surface being here altogether free from the small stones which had previously caused so much damage to the horses' feet. That night we halted, as usual, by the side of a lagoon, the water of which was not more than two inches deep.

312 Patricio during this day's journey pointed out to me a dry lagoon near which efforts had been made to sink a well for obtaining a permanent supply of water, but, although the shaft was of some depth, none had been reached, and the work had been given up in despair. It is a mystery even to the Indians where the guanacos, wild horses, puma, and other game that exist in this desert, find water, as these lagoons, depending entirely on the rainfall for a supply of water, must inevitably, in this country where little rain falls, be dry for many months in the year. No doubt springs exist in hitherto undiscovered places.

133 Before leaving the travesia, a few remarks, which cannot claim to be called a description, may be interesting.

This desert consists of a plateau about three hundred feet above the level of the valley of the Rio Negro, stretching to the southward more than thirty leagues to Valchita. Of its extent westward I have no precise information; but it narrows considerably in the interior, forming an irregular triangle, with its base on the coast, and its apex near the junction of the Rio Limay and the northern streams.

The soil is either clay or sand and gravel, with small stones strewn thickly over the surface; while the only vegetation met with consists of the bushes already mentioned, and scanty tufts of coarse grass.

It is much dreaded by travellers, and, after traversing it, I can well believe the stories current of people having perished on the passage; the track once lost would be very difficult to regain; while the want of water in the summer, and the danger of horses straying and leaving the traveller helpless, are both probable risks. With all our watchfulness, two horses strayed away and were lost. In the winter there is no fear of want of water; but the fatigue of travelling is at all times great, and the horses are almost worn out by the time that the desert is passed. It serves, therefore, as a barrier, protecting Patagones from all dangers of attack by the Indians from the south, who in their forays must descend the river. A large troop of horses can scarcely find pasture, 133 and after the rapid journey would not be in a condition for their riders to attack with success, if opposed vigorously by people able to defend themselves.

This district[1/A] appeared to form a distinct and well-defined 136 limit between the habitats of various animals; as, for instance, the Rhea Darwinii, or smaller ostrich of Patagonia, and the Rhea Americana. The latter, according to my experience, is never found to the south of it, and I am at a loss to understand how Mr. Cunningham could have met with any specimens of it, as he seems to imply.*

The Tehuelches often described the larger Rhea as found north of the travesia, and as distinct from that hunted in their country. They also particularly insisted on the fact that the Gama, or deer—abundant in the Rio Negro valley and the country north of it—is never met with south of the travesia. The same remark is true of the Viscacha and the Aguarra (Lupus manatus), though the latter is probably to be met with in the spurs of the Cordillera.

Patagonia may thus be properly considered as cut off by the Rio Negro and the line of the Cordillera, and possessing its own races and a separate Fauna and Flora.

It may be added that only one species of armadillo, the Quirquincho (Dasypus minutus, Gay), occurs within these limits. The algarroba and other bushes, though found in 137 and near the borders of the travesia, do not occur south of its immediate vicinity.

It was a joyful hour for all when, on the fourth day, after 484 galloping from dawn till ten o'clock, we at length came in sight of the valley, still three miles distant, where large [37] willows—which, by the way, are unknown in Patagonia, save a few at Chupat, probably introduced by the settlers—marked the winding course of the Rio Negro. We halted at the head of an abra, or lateral opening which ran up [38] into the barranca from the main valley, and saw in the

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* 'Natural History of the Straits of Magellan,' p. 134.

[1/A] [i.e. the travesia, or desert—Analyst]

484 distance a solitary rancho, the first civilised dwelling beheld since my departure from Santa Cruz.

After a rest, to enable all to come up, some having lagged behind perforce, their horses being hardly able to limp along, we made our way down the slope, and at length reached the river, in which our thirsty steeds soon drank their fill.

The rancho, which belonged to Hernandez, for whom the convoy of mares was intended, was then visited. The owner was absent, but his Indian wife did the honours, at least as far as serving us with matè, for no food was produced, though all were dreadfully hungry. I wished to stop and don what an American would call my citizen's clothes, thinking that we should immediately proceed to the Guardia I had heard so much of from Luiz Aguirre; but he told me not to be in a hurry, so in my dirty mantle I remained for the present.

After half an hour's delay we left the rancho and followed the south bank of the river, which here was a swift stream 200 yards wide, passing the farm of Hernandez, where a man was occupied in ploughing, and mares and cattle were grazing.
● [133] The river here made a bend towards the southern barranca, which so nearly abutted on it as to compel us to ride close along the bank. Small partridges got up frequently, and I made a mental resolution to come and have a day's shooting
[136] at a future period in the magnificent willows bordering the river; blue pigeons were cooing in the trees; and through an opening we caught a glimpse, on the opposite bank, of a well-built, comfortable-looking estancia in the foreground of a wide extent of rich flat land, with corral, galpones, and the usual surroundings, which Luiz Aguirre informed me belonged to Mr. Kincaid. The feeling of having safely emerged from the desert into the settlements put us, though
484 very hungry, into the best of spirits; and after a cheerful
133 half-hour's ride, passing on our road a tumbledown, unused rancho, we arrived at Sauce Blanco, or 'White Willow;'

there the river, sweeping to the northern side, leaves a wide 484
rincon, or expanse of rich alluvial ground. This is con- 133
sidered as belonging to the Indians, some of whom are always to be found encamped near the rancho, which belonged to the cacique El Ingles, and three toldos were pitched in its vicinity.

We presented to the chief his wife, whom we had brought 574
with us, and I was warmly welcomed as a relative, the cacique being a nephew of Quintuhual. This chief derives his name from his alleged relationship to some one or other of the officers of Fitzroy's surveying expedition, so that I was doubly welcome in my English and Indian character. Here we camped amongst the pajas, or pampa grass, and, 252
having been presented with a mare and some pumpkins, soon had a good fire blazing and meat and pumpkins cooking; these latter being dressed by cutting them in halves, taking out the seeds, and filling the interior with hot ashes, and then placing them on the ashes, the result being, at all events as it seemed then to my taste, delicious. I wished 464
to proceed direct to the Guardia, but as Patricio and the others put it off till the morrow, in my ignorance of the road and usages of the place, I was forced to 'do at Rome as Rome does.'

A good wash in the river was one of the first things indulged in, and the enjoyment of getting rid of several days' accumulation of the dust and mud of the travesia can be better imagined than described.

The following morning, before daylight, we all bathed in the river, and, after taking maté with the cacique El Ingles, and a warm by the fireside after sleeping in the frosty night air, we prepared to visit the Guardia. Casting off the Indian mantle, I assumed the usual dress of an Englishman of the period, shooting-coat, &c.; and having been provided with fresh horses by our friend, half an hour's gallop brought us to the north bank, opposite the Guardia—not, however, without misadventure, for as we made our way along the narrow, T A 175 646 Indians forming a league and declaring war against the Spaniards, whose name up to the present they detest. Being obliged to abandon his intention of reaching Valdivia, Vallarino reluctantly determined to return, and accordingly after being supplied by his allies with a store of apples and piñones, descended the river and returned to Carmen.

T A 178 133 From the description of this journey, together with the mention of the supplies of apples and piñones obtained at the farthest point reached, I am inclined to assume that this point was near, if not identical with, the place where we passed the Limay on our journey to Las Manzanas, a mile or two below the rapids where Mr. Cox was wrecked.

Villarino states that he entered in his small boat a channel where the river flowed over rounded stones to the S.W. Now the point where Mr. Cox's boat was lost was a rapid to all appearance impassable for a boat: however, it is possible that Vallarino employed Indians on horseback to track his boat, and that the state of the river was more favourable for navigation at the period of his visit.

T A 175 The mention of the friendly Indians who accompanied him on his return and settled under the protection of the Spaniards, suggests the idea that these may have been the ancestors of Los Manzos or the Tame Indians, at present in the service of the Government. Casimiro had a legend about Indians friendly to the first Spanish settlers, who were subsequently ill-treated by them, and I believe revolted. Luis Aguirre also asserted that his father was one of the original chiefs of the Rio Negro, who for a long time was friendly to the Spaniards, but at length, a revolt taking place, was imprisoned and kept in Carmen as a hostage, where he died. In the year 1833, when Rosas, for the protection of the southern frontier, made his great attack on the Indians, and driving them back to the neighbourhood of the Cordillera, forced them to submit to his terms, he established a military post at Choelechel, as advised by Villarino. His scheme was, I believe, to extend from this point a chain of forts as

2: Mustere T-5 (1869-1870)1871
[illegible]

End map A

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870) 1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

133
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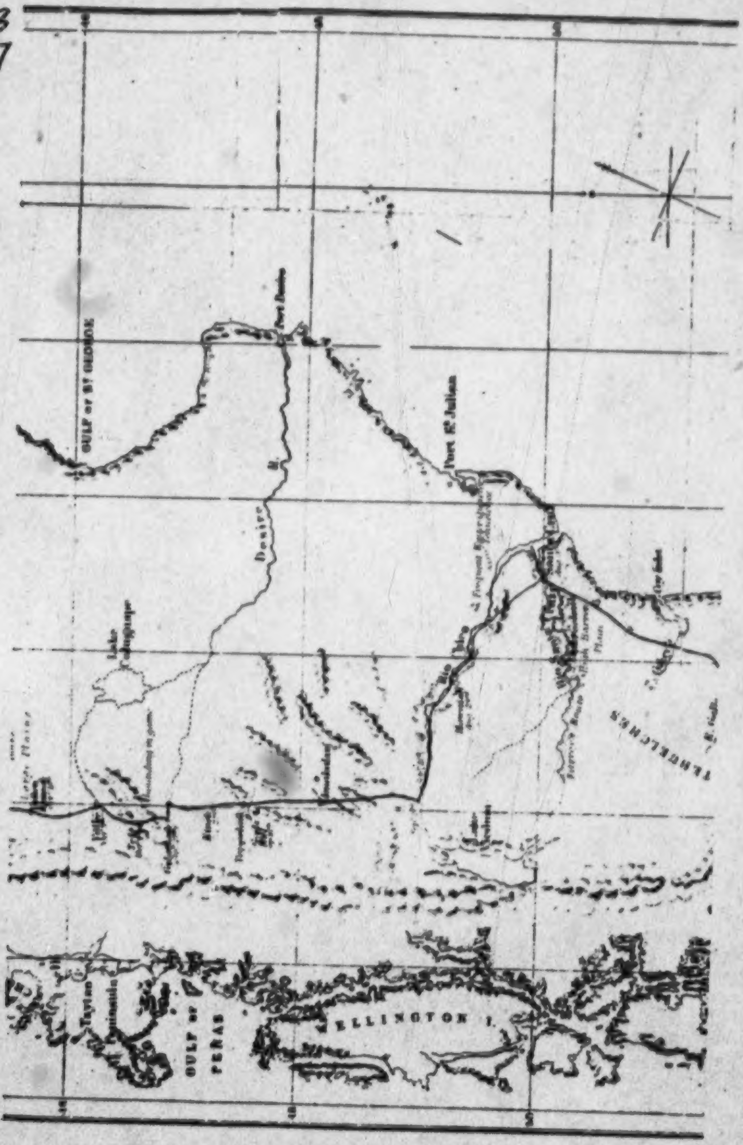
GULF OF ST GEORGE
Port Desire
Desire
Lake Colhuapi
Large Plains
Port St Julian
Rio Chico
Santa Cruz
Coy Inlet
TEHUELCHES
Tayton Peninsula
GULF OF PEÑAS
WELLINGTON I.

End map B

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

133
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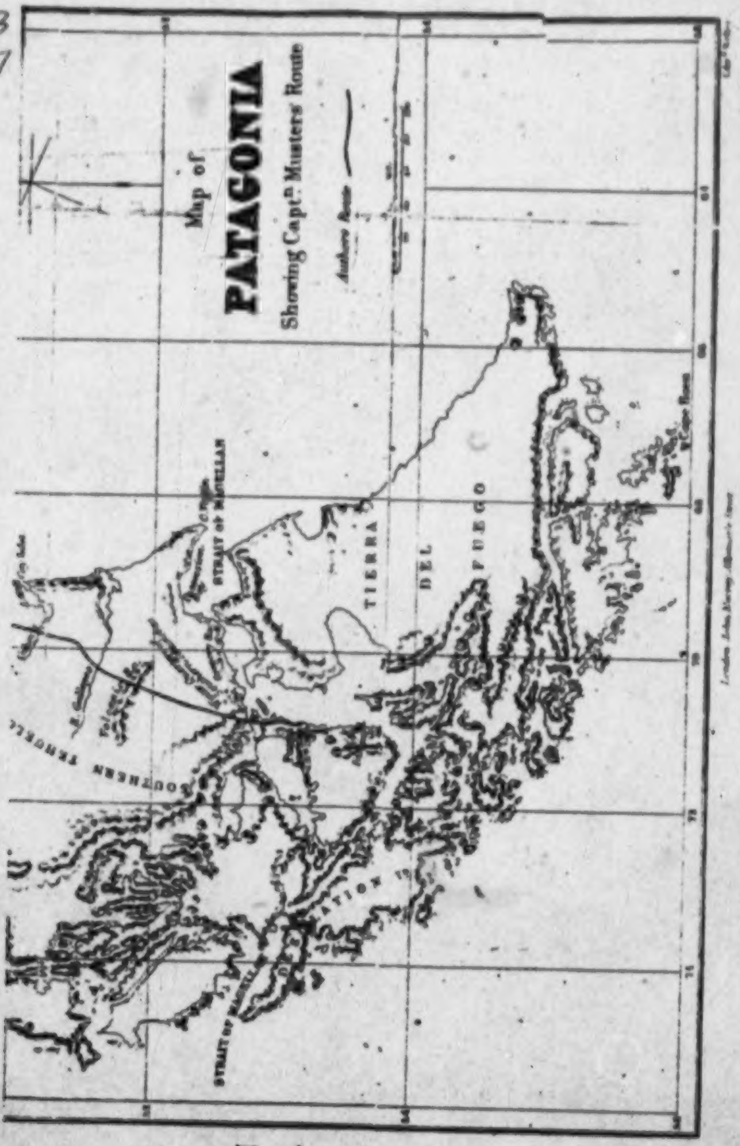
Map of
PATAGONIA
Showing Captn. Musters' Route
Authors Route
STRAIT OF MAGELLAN
STRAIT OF MAGELLAN
SOUTHERN TEHUELC
TIERRA
DEL
FUEGO
Cape Horn
London John Murray Albemarle Street

End map C

114 tunity of becoming acquainted with that little-known part of America and its wandering inhabitants.

131 The name Patagonia is here applied to the country extending
from the line of the Rió Negro, about latitude 40 deg. south, to
the Straits of Magellan; and is bounded on the east by the
Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by the Cordillera of the Andes,
although the Chilians, for their own purposes, make the Pacific
● 133 the western limit. The ordinary notion that this great tract is
an inhospitable desert of high barren plains and rocky hills is
only correct as applying to portions of the coast line and certain
isolated districts of the country. The interior presents abundance of watered valleys, and pasture over which roam countless
[136] herds of guanaco and innumerable ostriches, by which name the
Rhea Darwinii is generally known. And the numerous horses
of the wandering tribes never fail to find food and water.

The Indians (to use the misnomer handed down from the first
101 Spanish discoverers) inhabiting this country are divided into
three distinct races, differing in physique and language, and, in some marked respects, in their modes of life. Besides these the Fuegians, or, as the Tehuelches call them, Yamonascunna, though properly inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, are sometimes found upon the south-west coasts of the mainland; with these I had no intercourse, and their habits have been described by many other travellers, and they are mentioned in order to avoid unnecessary queries.

The Patagonians are called by themselves Ahonicanka, or Tchonek, but are more usually known as Tehuelche or Tehuel people, a name probably given them by the Araucanians, and by which they are generally designated. These are divided into northern and southern. The northern generally frequent the district extending from the Santa Cruz river to the Rio Negro. And the southern range over the remainder of the country from the Santa Cruz river to the Straits. These two tribes are however much intermixed, and, as in the case of the party of Indians with whom I travelled, are to be met with hunting and roving in company in all parts of the country; they are, however, distinguishable by dialectical differences in accent, and differ slightly in physique, and in the frequent feuds and quarrels they display as much hostility as if they were distinct races.

The second race of natives is usually known as the Pampas or Penck, whose district lies between the Chupat river and the Rio Negro; these are an offshoot of the Pampas Indians of the plains north of the Rio Negro, having their head-quarters at Las Salinas near Bahia Blanca. They speak a distinct language, somewhat similar to, but not identical with, that of the Araucanos, and are notably different in physique and feature from the Tehuelche.

000 through which I passed were viewed with a calmness that had been before unattainable, and which is now scarcely credible, on recollection. So true is it that our strength is unknown to ourselves till it is thoroughly tested.

The hope of immediate release, however, was at an end; my savage captors, it seemed, must be looked upon as for an indefinite period my masters and companions; and I had nothing at present to do but to divert myself by a study of their manners and habits; to consult my safety by a close study of their character, and of the ways and means by which so to adapt my deportment to it as to win their confidence, to disarm hostility, and to seize opportunities.

133 Patagonia, as it offered itself to my observation, more
than answered the descriptions of geographers, — bleak,
barren, desolate, beyond description or conception, — only
to be appreciated by being seen. Viewed from the Straits
of Magellan, it rises in gentle undulations or terraces.
Far as the eye can reach, in a westerly direction, it assumes
a more broken and hilly appearance, and long ranges of
mountains, extending from north to south, divide the eastern
[134] from the western shore. The soil is of a light, sandy char-
acter, and bears nothing worthy the name of a tree. Low
[137] bushes, or underwood, are tolerably abundant, and in the
valleys a coarse, wiry grass grows luxuriantly. Streams
[312] of water are rare. The natives draw their supplies prin-
cipally from springs or pools in the valleys, the water of
which is generally brackish and disagreeable.

136 The variety of animal is nearly as limited as that of vegetable productions. The guanaco, a quadruped allied to the lama, and with some resemblance to the cameleopard,

The ferrying recommenced the next morning: and before night the whole tribe were safely landed, with their effects, on the west side of the river, and their wigwams were all pitched. We were short of provisions; but this was a common case, and I was accustomed to it. I got an occasional morsel of grease, sufficient to keep starvation at bay; but illness, with bad and insufficient food, had greatly emaciated me, till I was a spectacle but few degrees above the living skeleton. But hope was still in the ascendant, and I had no idea of lying down to die till I was quite sure my time had come. We continued our wanderings the next day in a westerly direction, slaying every living creature that came within reach, from a skunk to a guanaco. This was a great disappointment, as I hoped we should go down the river, the direction in which they said "Holland" lay, and the only direction in which we were likely to strike a white settlement, if any existed on the Atlantic coast. But my remonstrances on this head were vain; they would go where they pleased, and I must go with them. Time dragged heavily; hours seemed days, and days weeks. But impatience is no virtue, and submission was imperative. 000

The country hereabout was more broken and mountainous than any we had before traversed, with a more abundant growth of bushes, and some clumps of stunted trees here and there. As we proceeded, keeping still to the north-west, game was more plenty. We came to two ponds, or small lakes, one of not more than four acres in extent, the other considerably larger; the latter was shallow, at least near the shore, as some ostriches pursued 133 224

133
224 by the Indians ran into it, and their pursuers waded after, and succeeded in capturing them.

126 At one time I observed a large scar in the calf of the chief's leg; the mark of a wound that must have been inflicted a long time before, as it was completely healed. Its depression was so great as to indicate a very severe cut, unless the old fellow had grown uncommonly fat since he received it. On inquiring the cause of it, he said it was from a wound inflicted by the Alanagros, a tribe inhabiting a country to the northward. The name he gave them signifies the blacks; and, from the manner in which he spoke of them, I inferred they were in some respects superior to the Patagonians. He said they were armed with cutlasses, and very long knives,—had tobacco, and plenty of horses; and I conjectured that they might have been a party of Spanish Americans, or one of the mixed races of Spanish origin. The fight, he said, arose on occasion of his tribe being on a horse-stealing expedition; they encamped a short distance off, and at night he made a descent on the Alanagros, killed some of them, and plundered their camp, carrying off many of their horses. The plundered tribe rallied, hotly pursued them, and recaptured a part of the booty; in the struggle wounding him with a cutlass, and, as I judged by appearances, cutting to the bone. He told the story with great spirit, slashing right and left, and grunting with extraordinary emphasis, as if to give an impression that good hard blows were given and taken; but I afterwards learned that it was a cowardly running fight, in which more sweat than blood was spilled.

000 Nothing of importance occurred at our encampment near

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTHERN COAST OF THAT REGION OF THE SOUTH COMMONLY CALLED PATAGONIA

The harbor of Santa Elena is a good one for all types of ships and
133 is situated on the 40° line of southern latitude. Sweet water is to be found
only in a glade to the west, filled by the winter rains as they are held by
[312] a ridge which lies across the glade's mouth near the beach. Inland, some
four or five leagues, the Indians reported the presence of some small
[137 springs. All the terrain is rocky except for the small valleys, in which
313] there is good grass and an abundance of espinillo firewood. The Indian
[222] chief who rules this section is called Ayzo; his jurisdiction stretches up
to the harbor of San Gregorio. He said that from the coast westward
toward the mountains there are some 70 leagues of habitable land, but
the land beyond that limit is absolutely uninhabitable by man or beast.
136 Hares are very abundant here, being like small antelope and very good
to eat; quirquinchos, [type of armadillo--Translator] also good eating,
[415] have shells which the Indians use as pans or plates; pumas have flesh
which is very savory, juicy and tender, and is like the roasted breast of
a turkey; there are a few guanacos too, some partridges and many
[262] ostriches. The Indians subsist on all of these, as also on horse meat,
which they have in great abundance and which is their favorite food.
Fish, in which the harbor abounds, is of the kind which we call borriquete
and pejerey, both of which are delicious.

133 The harbor of San Gregorio is situated at 45° 4' latitude south.
It is not very secure and its entrance is bad owing to its rock strewn bottom
and weak anchorage. The terrain which surrounds it is rocky and
rugged; one must go inland some 5 leagues [65] before striking water.
The mountain chain is about as far from this harbor as it is from that of
[134] Santa Elena, according to the Indians. This land is even more sterile
[622] than the former. The Indian chief who controls these lands is called
136 Gorgona. The game and fish are the same as in the previous place but
[224] the Indians do not eat the fish since they do not know how to catch them
and lack the necessary implements for doing so. In the cove called
Camarones there is an abundance of shrimp, as there is also in San Julian
and Puerto Deseado, and a kind of fish called gallo; but as already mentioned,
[313] the Indians do not make use of them. There is here quite a lot
of espinillo firewood, and the rock is very solid and hard.

133 The gulf of San Jose is south of cape Matas, which is at the same
latitude as San Gregorio; from the point at which its mouth begins to
cape Blanco, there are 80 leagues. The northern shores have been explored
by small ships to a point about 40 leagues to the west. There are

133 many havens there, protected by numerous islands and sandbanks. The
coast is not as high, but the land is even more barren than that of the
[136 other harbors, there being neither water nor grass, although firewood is
312] not altogether lacking, especially inland. The Indians said that the gulf
313] continues toward the west almost up to the mountains, that some springs
flow into it there and that it is impossible to cross the mountains to the
other side. They added that there is much espinillo brushwood in the
[487] region, going from north to south, through which they have cut paths in
order to get through, and should they ever deviate from these paths, they
become lost. The southern shores of the gulf, they say, are more arid
than the northern, but the fauna is the same as in the others. The
[622] Indian chiefs who rule this territory are two brothers, called Chaiguas
and Enis.

Puerto Deseado is situated at 47° 48′ of southern latitude; it is
a good harbor but of difficult entry because of the narrowness of its
mouth and the violence of the currents which flow in it. The coast is
[312 very high and craggy; there is firewood and in the gullies there are some
313] small springs of sweet but slightly brackish water, some 14 in all, which
can take care of any need. Game is the same as it was in the other parts;
[136] there are innumerable sea lions and seals and an abundance of guanacos.
[622] The chief who controls these lands is called Ulquiquenque; he said that
the mountain chain is about 20 "sleeps" from the harbor, which must
be about 70 leagues, and also that it is impossible to cross over to the
other side, that his people have never crossed nor seen other Indians cross
[135] the mountains. In this district there is white, black, red and other
colored rock, and a little marble in small broken pieces. [66] The
[384] earth also is of various colors and the Indians use it to make their paints.
[136] There are also many seals and sea lions on the islands in the haven.

The harbor of San Julian is located at 49° 21′ of southern latitude
and is the best on the coast, although the entrance to it is difficult for
an unpracticed person because of the bank at its mouth and two others
which are inside. The terrain also is the best on the whole coast, not at
all rocky and more fertile, as we found out when we were there the three
years which the settlement lasted from 1781 to 1784 [sic]. The closest
[312] source of water is about a league from the beach, and is made up of
some wells filled by the overflow from a spring which lies about a league
[313 and a half away. There is ample firewood in all the dells, all of which
137] also abound in grass and water, the terrain being made up almost en-
tirely of such gullies, and of stoneless hills. The mountain chain is 70
leagues away toward the west, and at its base there are three cove-like
depressions in each of which there is a lake fed by the snow which melts
~~on the~~ mountain tops. I explored this region at the foot of the mountains

133 entirely and could find no pass, it being impossible even for the animals
to cross over to the other side, all passages being closed off by snow
[484] most of which has frozen solid and is, as it were, petrified. This finding made plausible the assertion which the Indians make to the effect
that they have never crossed the mountains here or in any of the other
places already named. From the first of the three lakes mentioned there
flows a small river which runs into the haven of Santa Cruz; from the
second, located to the south of the first, springs the stream which the
Indians call Chalia, which flows into the Rio Grande de Santa Cruz; the
last and southernmost of the three lakes gives birth to the Rio Grande de
Santa Cruz, which flows into the haven of the same name, situated at
622 50° 12' of southern latitude. The chief who lives in this district, which
comprises the land between Puerto Deseado and the Rio de Santa Cruz
[sic], is called Camelo, and we called him Julian. He is one of the
chiefs with the largest following in his nation; his lieutenant is a son-in-law of his called Onos, and he lives in the vicinity of the Santa Cruz
lakes.

133 Fifteen leagues from the Santa Cruz river there is another stream,
fed by the mountain snows, which runs in that area and turns toward the
Straits of Magellan. This stream flows into the cove named Gallegos
and is not navigable, reports of other ancient travelers to the contrary.
At 52° of southern latitude is the Cabo de las Virgenes, and the Straits
of Magellan start there. The mountains come down so close to the very
Straits, at its mid point, that even here it is impossible to reach [67] the
[312 other side by land. There are here a number of small snow-fed streams,
315] an abundance of firewood and good grasslands which support the infinite
136] number of guanacos that live in the region. The Indian chief who governs
137] these lands is called Coopan. He is one of those having the largest fol-
[622] lowing, but all his people travel on foot, the tents and small belongings
492 being transported by dogs. Only the chief and his women have horses,
484 which are supplied to them by their neighbor Camelo, chief of San Julian.
727 This state of affairs has existed for some years, in fact since Camelo invaded this territory and took away all the horses. Since the invasion it
has been his policy to supply chief Coopan and his wives with horses, but
no one else, and in this way he is able to keep his southern neighbors
224 under his control. Horseless, they hunt guanacos on foot, and as there
136 are many of these animals they are able to live pretty well in this territory.
In Puerto Deseado and in San Julian a good many of these animals also
live, yet not as many, and there the Indians can hunt them with greater
east since they have horses; but then again, the Indians here in the more
136 southern part who lack horses are themselves more agile and robust. In

he ease the soul's distress somewhat until the decreed time comes 775
around. They are so superstitious in this matter that some are persuaded 782
that it is desirable to put a little food and valuables in the grave so
that the souls of the deceased may eat and entertain themselves; others
think that this is fruitless, believing that the idol will supply them with
all that is necessary. This matter is ordered in each [78] family according 778
to the opinion of the imposter witch doctor, who deceives himself 756
and hoodwinks the others as he pleases, no notice being taken of
his inconsistencies, even when his thoughts and his commands are seen
to be continually at variance. These liars make the others believe
that the idol makes signs with its hands, and that it speaks, and then
they repeat what they say they have heard the idol say, before the
people are present at the time when the witch doctor unwraps the idol,
and they see with their own eyes that it is a lie, if the witch doctor says
that it has spoken or gesticulated, that is enough for them to believe
the thing blindly.

They are of the opinion that nothing they can do can offend the 776
deity they worship in any way, and so they believe that the adversities 778
and punishments which he sends them are not because they have deserved
them because of their transgressions, but because the idol just gets it
into its head to treat them badly. Thus the graciousness of this power
consists in having good horses, health and peace, in finding plentiful
game, and in the faithfulness of their neighbors.

The number of Indians who are here settled is about 4,000 persons. [161]
They occupy the territory on the coast which has already been 131
indicated. They cannot leave this region because they are hemmed in
on the east by the sea, on the north by the Rio Negro and the Pampas
Indians of Buenos Aires, and on the west and south by the mountain chain
which it is impossible to cross owing to its height and because it is covered
with snow the year round. So forbidding are these mountains that they
are to all intents uninhabited, even by birds.

In all this land there is absolutely no lumber for construction purposes, 137
but there is an abundance of firewood on all hands, good for burning, [313]
and the greater part of the ground is covered with sabine, torbisco,
thyme and gomieles. All the land is rugged and cut up into hills, gullies 133
and valleys. One of these latter is to be found twenty leagues away from
San Julian, and is a very pleasant place which the Indians call Oenna.
There are in it innumerable springs with good water. In most of the 312
gullies and valleys springs are to be met with at a distance of one, two,
three or four leagues from the shore. It is improbable that these parts are

It is improbable that these parts
contain metals, because if there were metal here the Indians would have 135
found it and put it to use; and they would naturally have come upon it at one time or another as they are never in one place very long, changing from one site to another in order to subsist on the game which, according to season, moves inland or comes down to the beaches.

The weapons which they use are the bolas and the lasso, and also 411
knives and sabers which they acquire from the Pampas Indians of Buenos [439]
Aires or [79] else make themselves from any piece of iron given them 325
and which they regard highly for this reason. They also sometimes find iron on the beaches, the remains of wrecked ships. It requires a great deal of effort on their part to make one of these weapons because, even though they heat the iron by fire, as they have no tools they can only avail themselves of stones to beat it into shape then they must grind it by hand and trim it on the rocks and give it a sharp edge and a point.

In their battles they fight on foot, leaving the women in charge 726
of the horses. They put on garments similar to men's shirts, with tight [714]
sleeves, made out of ten or twelve well-worked deer hides which no knife or saber can penetrate. They put a sort of hat or helmet upon their heads made of horse or bullock hide, shielded with which they attempt to slash the enemies' legs and cut through their boots, they being more vulnerable there. They are very resolute and persevering in battle and do not abandon the field once upon it until they are either overpowered or killed. They also use the bolas, and every person who is overcome is usually killed because they become so zealous and cruel in battle that
they will not give up. This is why this region is not more thickly popu- [164]
lated, for the women are very fecund and few diseases bother them. 842]

From Santa Elena to the Rio Negro the Indians say that the land 133
is parched and waterless and only in the rainy season can a few small
lakes be found. When these are dry they are obliged, when they wish 487
to go to the Rio Negro, to travel inland towards the mountains where there are springs. As they have to travel uphill far to the west to do this the distance is three times greater when they wish to come down to the Spanish settlement, compared to the coastal road, if this latter had water.

The tents are pitched by sticking two poles about two or three 342
yards long into the ground, about four and a half feet from each other; beside each pole and at an equal distance from it, they thrust two shorter poles into the ground. To the west of these six they place six shorter ones at an equal distance, and to the west of these at the same distance, six others a little more than three feet long. Upon these eighteen poles they place the hide with the hair outward, and secure it to the upper end of all of the poles. From each pole they hang, on the inside, as it were curtains of hide which form the necessary divisions. These curtains are tied to the